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2024 OVMA GREAT IDEAS CONFERENCE

FOSTERING WELLNESS, DRIVING SUCCESS!

PROCEEDINGS

JUNE 19 - 21, 2024 | DEERHURST RESORT, HUNTSVILLE, ONTARIO



ONTARIO
VETERINARY
MEDICAL
ASSOCIATION

#2024GREATIDEAS

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2024 OVMA GREAT IDEAS CONFERENCE

SPEAKER BIOS



Saajan Bhakta, PhD (Psychology)

Former Director of Employee Experience at VetCor

Dr. Saajan Bhakta holds a bachelor's degree in Psychology, a master's degree in Criminal Justice from Wichita State University, and a PhD in Psychology from Chicago. Specializing in neuropsychology, his passion for understanding brain science spans diverse cultures. Currently an Associate Professor at the Kansas College of Osteopathic Medicine, he supervises global psychological research. With gratitude, Dr. Bhakta has travelled to 25+ countries, studying and working. For the past 8 years, he's been deeply involved in veterinary medicine, most recently serving as the Director of Employee Experience at VetCor, supporting well-being for 15,000+ veterinary professionals across the US and Canada.



Jason Coe, DVM, PhD

Professor Department of Population Medicine, Ontario Veterinary College, University of Guelph

Jason is internationally recognized for his leadership in researching and teaching clinical communication in veterinary medicine. After graduating from the Ontario Veterinary College (OVC) in 2001, Jason returned to the College from mixed-animal practice to complete a PhD in veterinary communications in 2008. Currently, Jason is a Professor and the VCA Canada Chair in Relationship-Centred Veterinary Medicine at OVC, where he has published over 100 peer-reviewed journal articles and coordinates the clinical-communication curriculum across all 4 years of the veterinary program. In 2022, he founded the research program Relationship-Centred Veterinary Medicine at the Ontario Veterinary College (<https://rcvm.uoguelph.ca/>).



Jen Gale, BVetMed

Carbon Literacy Trainer and Founder of Sustainable(ish)

Jen qualified from the RVC in the UK in 2004 and worked in small animal practice for over 10 years. In 2012 she and her family spent a year buying nothing new and following this 'ecopiphany'. Jen now works full-time in sustainability. She runs the Sustainable(ish) platform, hosts a podcast by the same name, and is the author of The Sustainable(ish) Living Guide. Jen is a Director at Vet Sustain, and a qualified Carbon Literacy Trainer, delivering Vet Sustain's Carbon Literacy course that has been designed specifically for the veterinary profession.



Bashore Halow, CVPM, LVT

Business Advisor, Halow Consulting

Bash is a graduate of the College of William and Mary, a certified veterinary practice manager and a licensed veterinary technician with 23 years of experience. He is a frequent contributor to DVM 360, Vetted, AAHA Trends and Today's Veterinary Business. He is a member of the advisory board for the Fetch360 veterinary conferences and has been an invited speaker at all the major U.S. veterinary conferences. In 2018, he addressed the Veterinary Management Association at the House of Lords, London. Recently, Mr. Halow was the recipient of the Pennsylvania Veterinary Medical Association's President's Award for management education in the state of Pennsylvania. His company, Halow Consulting, has worked with dozens of corporate and privately owned practices throughout North America.



Natasha Janke, PhD, Postdoctoral Fellow

Relationship-Centred Veterinary Medicine, Ontario Veterinary College, University of Guelph

Natasha Janke is a postdoctoral fellow and sessional lecturer at the Ontario Veterinary College (OVC) and is a member of Relationship-Centred Veterinary Medicine at the OVC research team. Her research spans from clinical communication to team-based veterinary medicine, and in 2021-2022 Natasha investigated a 15-month in-practice communication training intervention, helping to bridge the gap between research and practice. Natasha has been recognized as the first in veterinary medicine to be accepted into the prestigious Putnam Scholars Program of the Academy of Communication in Healthcare.



Elaine Klemmensen, DVM, CEC

Founder, Evolve Leadership Coaching & Consulting

Elaine is a speaker, coach and visual facilitator on a mission to help veterinary professionals engage in conversations that matter. Building on a successful career in veterinary medicine, Elaine is dedicated to helping the humans behind the hospital door. She holds certification in Values-Based Leadership, Executive Coaching, Strategic Visioning and the Art of Hosting facilitation training. Elaine lives in the beautiful West Kootenays and when not telling stories or learning something new, she is most likely exploring the world by bicycle with her husband Rob, and dog Eddie.



Yan Markson

TedX Speaker and Mentalist

Yan Markson is a speaker, perception strategist, and professional mentalist that explores the mental mechanisms behind perception, communication, innovation and growth mindset. For over 10 years Yan was head of marketing & communications at an award-winning Predictive Analytics and AI software company and consults businesses on marketing strategy, communications and innovation. Yan has presented and performed for hundreds of the top companies in the world, on TEDx, as well as on national TV shows in 3 countries.



Lee-Anne McAlear, HonsBA

The Centre of Excellence in Innovation Management Program Director, Schulich Executive Education Centre Program

Lee-Anne is the Program Director at the Centre of Excellence in Innovation Leadership, Schulich School of Business, York University where she's been for 12 years. Her expertise spans a wide spectrum of innovation domains and she has a broad range of clients in both the private and public sectors. Lee-Anne is a Partner at Current Organization Inc, a prominent Toronto-based innovation house. She is also a Featured Speaker with the National Speakers Bureau and author of innovation articles and book chapters on creativity. She has extensive international experience, having worked in 34 countries to embed, implement, and sustain innovation and is well-traveled with visits to over 100 airports worldwide. Lee-Anne is an accomplished late-blooming watercolorist with three sold-out art shows, a George Brown-trained cook and an apprentice in Japanese flower arrangement.



Kat Sutherland, PhD, Postdoctoral Fellow

Relationship-Centred Veterinary Medicine, Ontario Veterinary College, University of Guelph

Kat is currently a postdoctoral fellow with the Relationship-Centred Veterinary Medicine at the Ontario Veterinary College (OVC) research team and is an instructor in OVC's Medical Communications Program, where she enjoys working with student veterinarians to refine their communication skills. Kat's research focuses on understanding how veterinary-client communication can be enhanced to improve the quality of life for pets. Her research includes the development and evaluation of a 10-hour continuing education program designed to enhance veterinary professionals' communication in small animal veterinary practice, with emphasis on obesity-specific communication.

1001

BASIC PRACTICE HEALTH SCREEN: THE PROFIT AND LOSS STATEMENT

EXAMINING YOUR HOSPITAL'S FINANCIAL (AND CULTURAL) HEALTH

 Bashore Halow, CVPM, LVT | Business Advisor, Halow Consulting

This Hour

Basic Practice Health Screen: The Profit and Loss

1

Overview:
It's more than just numbers

Like a wellness panel, viewing your hospital's baseline through financial and performance reportage brings more context to the day-to-day observations of your business.

2

Specifically...

- Growth
 - Gross revenue
 - Net earnings
 - New clients
 - Progress towards goals
- Care
 - Availability
 - Extent
 - Compliant with accepted standards
- Leadership and staff performance
- Client compliance
- Loyalty (client retention)
- Popularity (website data)
- Engagement of your team

3

Standard Reports

- Profit and Loss
- Practice Summary (invoices, avg invoice, new clients, etc.)
- Category sales
- Metrics and sales by doctor
- Discount, voids, fee exception reports
- Referral report
- Payroll
- End of Day
- Inventory/service sales information
- Google analytics dashboard (visits, bounce rate, referrers, etc.)

4

Understanding Reports

Your most valuable asset when evaluating reportage is your curiosity. If you do nothing else, when reading your practice reportage, ask yourself, "Why is this so?"

5

Profit and Loss

6

The Four Twenties

- Gross Revenue 100%
- Minus -COGS ≤ 20%
- DVM salary ≤ 20%
- Support salary ≤ 20%
- Fixed costs ≤ 20%
- Equals • Net profit = 20%

Ensure that accounting is accrual

7

Fixed Costs

Side Note

- Usually \$6-\$10 per minute!

8

There are 7 classes of expenses

- COGS
- Payroll
- Employee benefits
- Continuing education
- Occupancy
- Equipment
- Administrative

9

How Do You Manage Inventory at a veterinary Practice?

by Bash Halow | Jun 9, 2020 | Uncategorized

10

COGS

(Cost of Goods Sold)

- 2nd highest cost in a vet practice
- 18-24% of Gross Revenue
- Use AAHA-VMG COA to normalize
- Look at direct costs for ideas on how to improve.

11

Direct Costs

Side Note

- Direct costs are an item's cost/revenue.
- Direct cost benchmarks for main stream items are reliable.
- A direct cost of 25% means that for every 25 cents you spend, you earn 1 dollar on the sale.

Category	Performance	Benchmark
Pharmacy		40%
Lab		25%
Imaging		10%
Anesthesia		11%
Dentistry		3%
Surgery		10%
Diet		60%

12

Payroll

- Highest cost in a vet practice
- 35-42% of Gross Revenue (includes payroll tax)
- Does *not* include benefits
- Doctors are usually 16-20% of gross
- Support staff usually ≤ 20% of gross
- Management ≈ 3-5% of gross

13

Benefits

- Usually 3-6% of gross revenue.
- This benchmark may be lagging behind recent benefits programs designed to retain employees.

14

1002

ADDITIONAL DIAGNOSTICS: INTERPRETING YOUR PIMS AND OTHER PERFORMANCE REPORTS

EXAMINING YOUR HOSPITAL'S FINANCIAL (AND CULTURAL) HEALTH

 Bashore Halow, CVPM, LVT | Business Advisor, Halow Consulting

This Hour

Additional Diagnostics: Interpreting PIMS and other reports

1

Summary Report



- Contains major metrics: gross sales, payments, invoices, avg. invoice, new clients, etc.
- No reliable benchmarks for new client #'s
- Avg invoice (opposed to patient invoice) is more frequently benchmarked, but is more likely to be unhelpful.
- Most of these data points should be evaluated for change over time or measured against your practice goals.

2

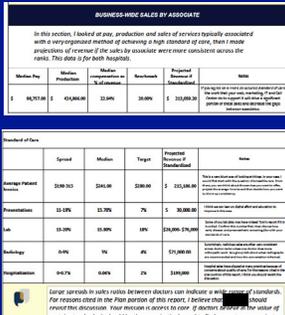
Category Sales



- Very reliable benchmarks for many category sales
- Ensure they are set up correctly in the software (AAHA-VMG COA)

3

Doctor-to-doctor stats



- Look for wide spreads in numbers between associates.
- Use the information to ask good questions, never punitively.

4

Discounts and Fee Exceptions

PRACTICE METRICS						
Fee Exceptions and Discounts						
	2019	% Change	2018	% Change	2017	% Change
Total Sales	\$1,760,747.56	2.04%	\$ 1,754,888.04	9.01%	\$ 1,609,768.85	11.50%
Fee exceptions	\$63,218.16	-26.30%	\$ 85,596.81	66.50%	\$ 263,523.81	
Late Charges	\$0.00		\$0.00		\$ 1,897.50	
Invoice Discounts	\$48,129.50		\$ 48,357.82		\$ 1,897.50	
P&L and POS Variance	\$48,533.01		\$3,241.34		\$7,332.54	
	0		0		0	

- Practices usually have four ways to discount:
 - Change prices (fee exceptions)
 - Programmed discounts (Senior citizen, military)
 - Manual entry (negative-value line item)
 - Discount code
- Go through all!
- Moving forward, only discount with a code

5

Additional Metrics

- Track reminder compliance over time (70%+ satisfied after 6 months)
- Check that sales = deposits
- Check accts. rcvb.
- Referrals

6

Side Note

Referrals

- Referral information is vital to wise advertising spending.
- Knowing that clients found you through Google is not enough information. Find out what was the deciding factor.
- Train your staff to pay special attention to new clients and phone shoppers.
- Don't be shy to ask for referrals or reviews.

How Did You Hear About Us? (Check all that apply) *

Search Engine (Google, Bing, etc.)

Social Media

Radio

Television

Streaming Service Ad

Newspaper/Online Newspaper

Billboard

Word of Mouth

7

Additional Metrics (Cont'd.)

- Inventory-to-service sales ratio (20/80)
- Check that inventory and service sales are reporting accurately

8

Additional Metrics (Cont'd.)

- Revenue/Labor hour = > \$100/hr
- Support staff minutes of labor / # invoices = < 110 minutes / invoice

9

Additional Metrics (Cont'd.)

Website

You have to take these 'graders' with a grain of salt. They are supplied by companies eager to sell you services, so they can be unfairly critical. Here's what I think is important to note:

- Revisit the pathway of shoppers finding your site and then rally them to a trackable CTA. This should be started just after our most immediate goals are accomplished in advance of the upcoming recession.
- According to the grader, photos are too large to load. This is an easy and worthwhile fix. Ensure that you decrease the file size of any photos on the site to < 100kb.
- Build an 'About Us' page.
- Have the 'Reviews' tab go to an internal page where you list your last reviews (currently it takes you to Google where you have some poor reviews near the top of the list)
- EXCELLENT! How did you find us? plug in
- Move to electronic forms on your site (your existing ones are printable PDFs)

- Use a 'Grader' On Google Analytics, look at:
- Visits
- Bounce rate
- Search sources
- Pages visited

10

Side Note

Websites

- Think of your websites as new client acquisition tools
- They should answer need and incite a CTA
- They should facilitate client education, support compliance, and manage appointments.

11

Recap

- What percentage of gross revenue is the average Cost of Goods at a well-run hospital?
 - 20%
- What percentage of gross revenue is the total payroll at a well-run, general practice?
 - 40%
- What percentage of gross revenue is the average net profit at a well-run hospital?
 - 20%

12

Recap (Cont'd.)

- What are the four twenties?
- COGS, Doctor costs, Support Staff costs, Fixed costs
- T or F: A profit and loss statement includes *business* loan payments.
- False

13

Recap (Cont'd)

- Why would you want to compare sales by doctor? What would you look at?
- How would you approach talking to a doctor about sales?

14

 **Break**

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15

1003

TREATING THE FINANCIALLY OR CULTURALLY ADR HOSPITAL

EXAMINING YOUR HOSPITAL'S FINANCIAL (AND CULTURAL) HEALTH

 Bashore Halow, CVPM, LVT | Business Advisor, Halow Consulting

This Hour:

Treating the Financially ADR Hospital

1

What is a healthy profit for a veterinary hospital?

You've finished your 5th year as a practice owner. After all expenses listed on a profit and loss statement have been paid (including a respectable salary for your work as a doctor) you have net profit margin of 5%. That is to say that of the 1M dollars in revenue that your practice generated, you have 50K left in the bank. You happy?

2

A Healthy Net Profit

1. Have you been compensated for your leadership efforts?
2. Today's RISK FREE rate is 5%, why invest in a risky business when you can buy a risk-free treasury, sit back, and let the money roll in?
3. Opening your new practice is expected to cost you 1 million dollars. How much above the risk free rate do you expect to be compensated for sticking your neck out?
4. Remember that net profit does *not* include debt service.

3

A Healthy Net Profit (Cont'd)

1. Most agree that 18-22% net profit is worth the risk.
2. Ensure that the net profit number has been adjusted to reflect true expense.
3. In today's market, every dollar of net profit is worth at *least* 8 dollars of practice value.

4

We're down 15% over same time last year.

The month's reportage shows that you are down 15% over last year. List all the potential reasons why.

5

Troubleshooting Sluggish Growth/Low Profit

1. Ensure you're taking into account any anomalies like missing a doctor, a Pandemic, etc.
2. Reminders are turned on and working properly
3. Check reminder compliance
4. Check void and fee exception reports. Confirm that sales data equals deposits.
5. Confirm that there are no drastic changes in Summary Report values (# invoices, avg. invoice, new clients, etc.)
6. Confirm that there are no drastic changes to doctor stats.

6

Troubleshooting Sluggish Growth/Low Profit (Cont'd.)

7. Ask front desk about phone shoppers and cancellations.
8. Ask front desk about record transfers
9. Confirm that phones are being answered in a timely fashion.
10. Confirm there are adequate openings in the schedule. And that more time isn't being blocked out.
11. Confirm that hours before closing are booking up.
12. Do room audits.
13. Do chart audits.
14. Check how your practice appears online.

7

Sluggish Growth/Low Profit (Cont'd.)

Common Direct Costs (cost/sales)

Direct Cost Benchmarks/Performance		
Category	Performance	Benchmark
Pharmacy		40%
Lab		25%
Imaging		10%
Anesthesia		11%
Dentistry		3%
Surgery		10%
Diet		80%

- Pharmacy 40-45%
- Lab 25%
- Diet 65-80%
- Total Direct 20-24% (of gross revenue)

8

Sluggish Growth/Low Profit (Cont'd.)

(Cost/sales)

- Total Labor: 40%
- Docs: 16-20%
- Taxes and benefits 10%
- Facility costs ≤10%
- Revenue/Labor hour= > \$100/hr
- Support staff minutes of labor/ # invoices = < 110 minutes/ invoice
- Break-even fixed costs usually add up to \$6-\$10 dollars per minute!

9

Sluggish Growth/Low Profit (Cont'd.)

Sales as a % to gross

- Pharm 22%
- Lab 20%
- Imaging 6%
- Surgery 4%
- Diet 3%
- Dentistry 4%
- Inventory/Services= 20/80

10

Sluggish Growth/Low Profit (Cont'd.)

Website/ Social

- Views/month= 3-5K
- Bounce rate 30-40% (much higher if blog heavy)
- CTR= >6%
- CTA= >3%
- >3 page views per session
- Pay attention to Google Ads ROI!
- Ensure the About Us page looks good
- After clients find you, almost all read reviews. Ensure you are addressing bad reviews online.



11

Sluggish Growth/Low Profit (Cont'd.)

Inventory

- Audit inventory orders
- Match packing slips to invoices, track inventory through the software.

12

Sluggish Growth/Low Profit (Cont'd.)

Payroll

- Ensure that payroll hours are reporting accurately to payroll processing.
- Investigate O.T.

13

Sluggish Growth/Low Profit (Cont'd.)

Pricing

- According to the CPI calculator, inflation is up by 18.25% since Sept. 2020.
- Ensure your pricing targets *margin*, not markup.
- *Markup* formula is Price-cost/cost
- *Margin* formula is Price-cost/Price
- Formula for pricing is Cost/ 1- Desired margin (written as a decimal).
- Example: 20% Margin on the price of something that costs 100 dollars is \$125 or 100/1-0.20= 100/0.80= \$125.00



14

Sluggish Growth/Low Profit (Cont'd.)

Pricing (Cont'd.)

- Pricing is best thought of in bundles
- Train your team to tell the story behind pricing, not to read items line-by-line.
- Discuss services in intangible, not tangible terms

15

Emphasize Intangible Benefits

	Tangible	Intangible	Cost
Catheter	Little plastic tube that allows us access to your cat's vein.	Part of our anesthetic safety package that is critical to your pet's care	\$35.00
Hospitalization	Every day your pet stays in one of our hospital cages, you get charged.	Personalized nursing by a licensed technician before and after your pet's procedure. Provides reassurance, comfort and safety. We do this until he is well enough to go home.	\$95.00
Medication Charge	Every time your pet gets a pill, you get a bill.	Safe, stress free, timely administration of your pet's medication and monitoring by licensed tech	\$25.00

16

Recap

- Why do hospital owners expect so much net profit from their practices?
- Risk free rate of return, risk premium, the heightened value of net profit in terms of practice value.
- Are our profit goals expressed in margin or markup?
- Margin. Margin is where we are going, markup is how we get there.

17

Break
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18

1004

A WHOLISTIC APPROACH TO A FINANCIAL WELLBEING

EXAMINING YOUR HOSPITAL'S FINANCIAL (AND CULTURAL) HEALTH

 Bashore Halow, CVPM, LVT | Business Advisor, Halow Consulting

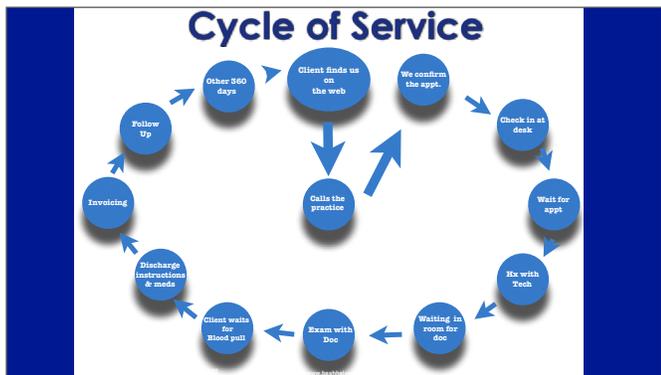
This Hour:

An Wholistic Approach to Financial Wellbeing

1



2



3

Client Experience

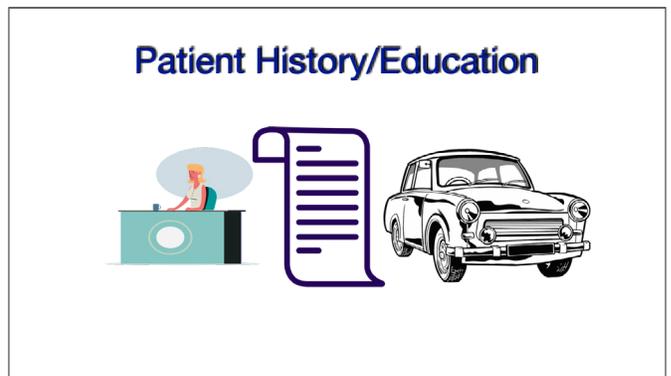
- Start with an interest in listening, caring, and helping the client with *her* needs.
- Add your thoughts about an action plan based on your knowledge and your assessment of *this* patient in front of you.
- Make a straight-forward recommendation
- Wait for a verbal or physical cue that is okay to proceed.
- Don't argue with a client about your position. Ask questions to find out more about her position.
- Target education to the client's *specific* concerns.

4

Concessions to Employees

- Despite concessions on pay, the work schedule, and how appts. are scheduled, team members are saying they are 'stressed'. What is really going on?
- At most practices, Fear Free, takes more time, but doesn't cost more money. Have you considered how to make up for the lost revenue?

5



6

Pre-Visit Questionnaire

Fields marked with an * are required

Are you a new or existing client? *

New Existing

Owner First Name *

Owner Last Name *

Email *

Phone *

What is the name of the pet we are seeing today? *

If we are seeing more than one pet, please complete a second form.

7

Fields marked with an * are required

Are you a new or existing client? *

New Existing

Owner First Name *

Owner Last Name *

Email *

Phone *

Have we seen this pet before? *

Yes No

What is the name of the pet we are seeing today? *

If we are seeing more than one pet, please complete a second form.

[Next](#)

8

Fields marked with an * are required

Are you a new or existing client? *

New Existing

Owner First Name *

Owner Last Name *

Email *

Phone *

Address *

City *

State/Province *

Zip/Postal *

Co-Owner (1)

First Name

Last Name

Phone

[Add Co-Owner](#)

What is the name of the pet we are seeing today? *

If we are seeing more than one pet, please complete a second form.

What species is your pet? *

Dog Cat

Date of Birth or Age (if known)

9

Fields marked with an * are required

Reason for today's visit *

Annual wellness exam

A puppy, kitten, or newly adopted pet

A medical condition that requires care

Medical recheck

Westway prescribed treatments, diagnostics, additional vaccines, or surgery

You Have Selected "A medical condition that requires care"

IMPORTANT: If your pet is experiencing any of the following symptoms, call us immediately, if it is past our hours of operation, use the contact numbers at the bottom of this field for immediate veterinary supervision.

- Unable to move
- Difficulty breathing
- Difficulty walking
- Excessive bleeding
- Inability to urinate or howling when trying to urinate
- Hit by car or any significant trauma
- Exposure to excessive heat, (especially flat-faced dogs or cats)
- Suspected poisoning
- Seizuring
- Severe vomiting or diarrhea (especially in patients <10 lbs)

Non Urgent Signs

If your pet is experiencing any of the following symptoms or signs, you will have an opportunity to tell us more later in the form:

10

Stool: Check all that apply

No changes to stool habits

Diarrhea

Much darker than usual

Firmer than usual

Having accidents in the house

I don't know. My pet hasn't lived with me long enough.

[Previous](#)

11

Stool: Check all that apply

No changes to stool habits

Diarrhea

Much darker than usual

Firmer than usual

Having accidents in the house

I don't know. My pet hasn't lived with me long enough.

BRING A STOOL SAMPLE

You selected a choice that indicates your pet may have an intestinal parasite. Please bring a sample of your pet's stool. You can pick it up with a plastic bag, invert the bag, tie it, and bring it in at the time of your pet's visit.

Have you noticed any blood or mucous in the stool. Check all that apply

Mucous

Blood

None or I'm not sure

Describe the appearance of the diarrhea

If you select 'other', you can use the field below to tell us more.

Watery

Pudding like

Soft but formed

Other



12



13



14

Efficiency

Exam

15

Employee Accomplishment and Growth

- The basics (food, housing, health, etc.)
- Social connection (love, safety, support, etc.)
- Self actualization

16

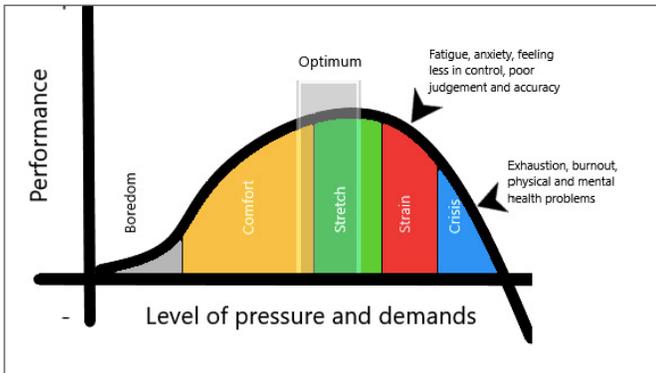
Motivators

Intrinsic motivators	Extrinsic motivators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A sense of accomplishment • Personal growth • Acceptance • Belonging • Part of something great, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lunch • Money • Time off • Prizes • Gift card • Candy • Tickets to an event, etc.

17

Should you push people to grow?

18



19

Teamwork

- Requires structure and practice.
- Requires and environment that is supportive, safe, and fair.
- Requires employees to buy into the Mission and take responsibility for their own junk.

20

Employee Happiness Agreement

I _____ agree that I am engaged by 3 things:

- Helping clients and the pets they own;
- Problem solving, learning and growing;
- Doing the above 2 things in the company of like-minded others.

Employer promises to help achieve the above inside a culture where:

- You can work to the best of your ability at a nourishing job;
- Employees feel safe and liked by their peers;
- Employees have a voice;
- Employees are helped to grow and rewarded for growth;
- And fairness predominates.

21

Stay In Touch

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2001

IT STARTS WITH TRUST

LEADERSHIP & COACHING

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Trust is the foundation upon which all our relationships are built. From rewarding partnerships with clients to healthy, productive teams to public trust in the veterinary profession. It is the foundation for psychological safety and the cornerstone of a healthy hospital culture. The glue that brings us together in challenging times and the lubricant that helps move us forward with less friction. It has been said that trust is one of the most essential forms of capital a leader has.

Edelman is an independently owned global communications firm that studies the influence of trust across society including the sectors of business, government, media and NGOs. Their research is published annually in a global report, the Edelman Trust Barometer. The [2023 Report](#) titled, “Navigating a Polarized World”, identifies a growing class divide fueled by economic anxiety, disinformation and a lack of faith in both our institutions and leadership. The report points to how distrust fuels polarization which echoes the work of Stephen Covey, businessman, thought leader, educator and author of “The Speed of Trust”. Trust, according to Covey, means confidence. When trust is high it means you believe in the integrity and capability of a person or organization. Alternatively, the opposite of trust, distrust, means you are guarded and suspicious about the person’s or organization’s agenda and integrity. In 2023, according to Edelman, public trust in government, media and NGOs all declined as compared to the 2022. One area where trust increased in 2023 was trust in business, in particular, independently owned businesses. This is encouraging for practice owners in the veterinary industry. The 2023 Edelman Trust Barometer identified an expectation for businesses to:

- Be a trustworthy source of information
- Base actions on science

- Act on the same values over time
- Not align with any one political party
- Refuse to bend to political pressure

The report also identified a clear desire for CEOs to take a public stand on the following issues:

- Treatment of employees
- Discrimination
- Climate change
- Immigration
- Wealth gap

In addition to Edelman’s research on trust, [McKinsey and Company](#) conducts global surveys designed to provide leaders in commercial, public and social sectors of society with facts and insights to build awareness and guide decision-making. The Great Attrition Survey (September 2021) identified that more than half of employees who left their jobs in the previous six months did not feel valued by their organization (54%) or manager (52%), or they lacked a sense of belonging (51%). An additional 46% cited the desire to work with people who trust and care for each other as another reason they quit.

The 2024 white paper “[Stay, Please: Factors that Support Retention and Drive Attrition in the Veterinary Profession](#)” from the American Animal Hospital Association surveyed over 15,000 veterinary professionals to discover 30% plan to leave their current job in the coming year. In exploring what drives attrition and what might make people stay, the importance of teamwork emerges. Teamwork, a sense of belonging and feeling valued all rely upon a solid foundation of trust.

These reports emphasize the importance of trust from both an organizational and a leadership perspective. The ability to build strong relationships grounded in trust is a critical leadership competency that impacts not only the success of our business but also the well-being of our team. Since the Covid-19 pandemic, it is becoming increasingly apparent that across industries people want stronger relationships, crave a sense of belonging and want deeper meaning in the work they do. Not surprisingly, stronger relationships, a sense of belonging and higher levels of trust are directly correlated with higher levels of well-being on teams.

Yet defining trust can be challenging. It is something we earn, something we build and something we feel. Much like defining leadership or culture, it can feel somewhat abstract and can be challenging to put into words. Perhaps this is because becoming a trustworthy leader is a complex interplay of our inner systems including values, beliefs and biases and our outer systems including our actions and behaviours. Trust is built from the inside out. We cannot expect our clients to trust

our hospital if our employees do not trust the leaders within the hospital. Today's leaders need competency in recognizing and managing their inner and outer systems if they hope to leverage the power of trust in partnership with those they lead. For this reason, building a foundation of trust in your hospital starts with the personal development of all the leaders on your team.

Francis Frei, a Harvard Business School Professor and former senior VP of leadership and strategy at Uber, offers a simple model to identify three drivers of trust: authenticity, logic and empathy. According to this model, people trust you when they:

- feel they are experiencing the “real” you
- have faith in your judgement and competence
- believe you care about them and your success.

When trust is lost or in the words of Frei, “wobbly”, it can almost always be traced back to a breakdown in one of these three drivers.

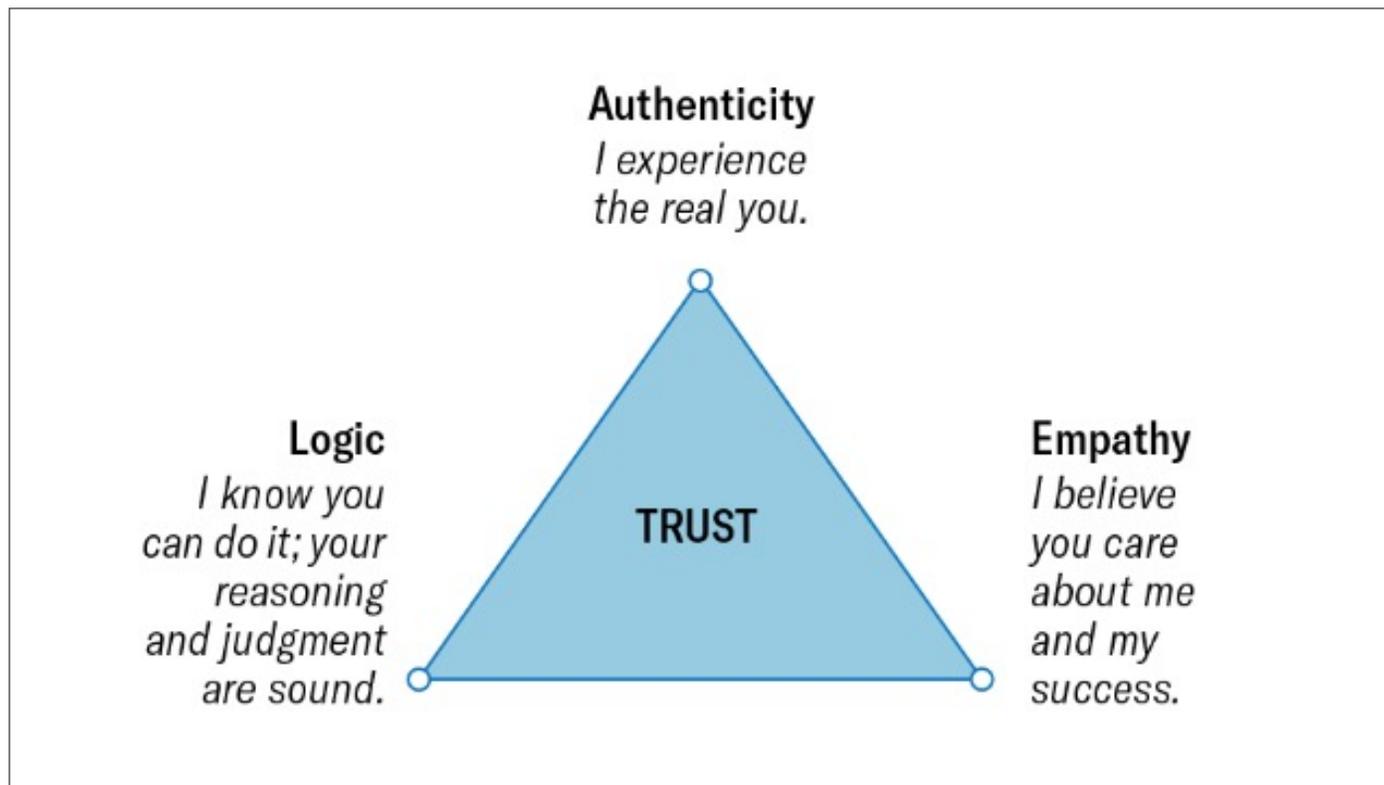


Diagram 1: Francis Frei's 3 drivers of trust from Harvard Business Review "Begin with Trust" (May-June 2020).

For a deeper understanding of these drivers, Richard Barrett, author of “The Values-Driven Organization: Cultural Health and Employee Well-Being as a Pathway to Sustainable Performance”, offers another model. Barrett’s

Trust Matrix is based on the work of Stephen Covey who identified two principal components of trust – competence and character. Barrett’s trust model goes a step further to explore what underlies these two components.

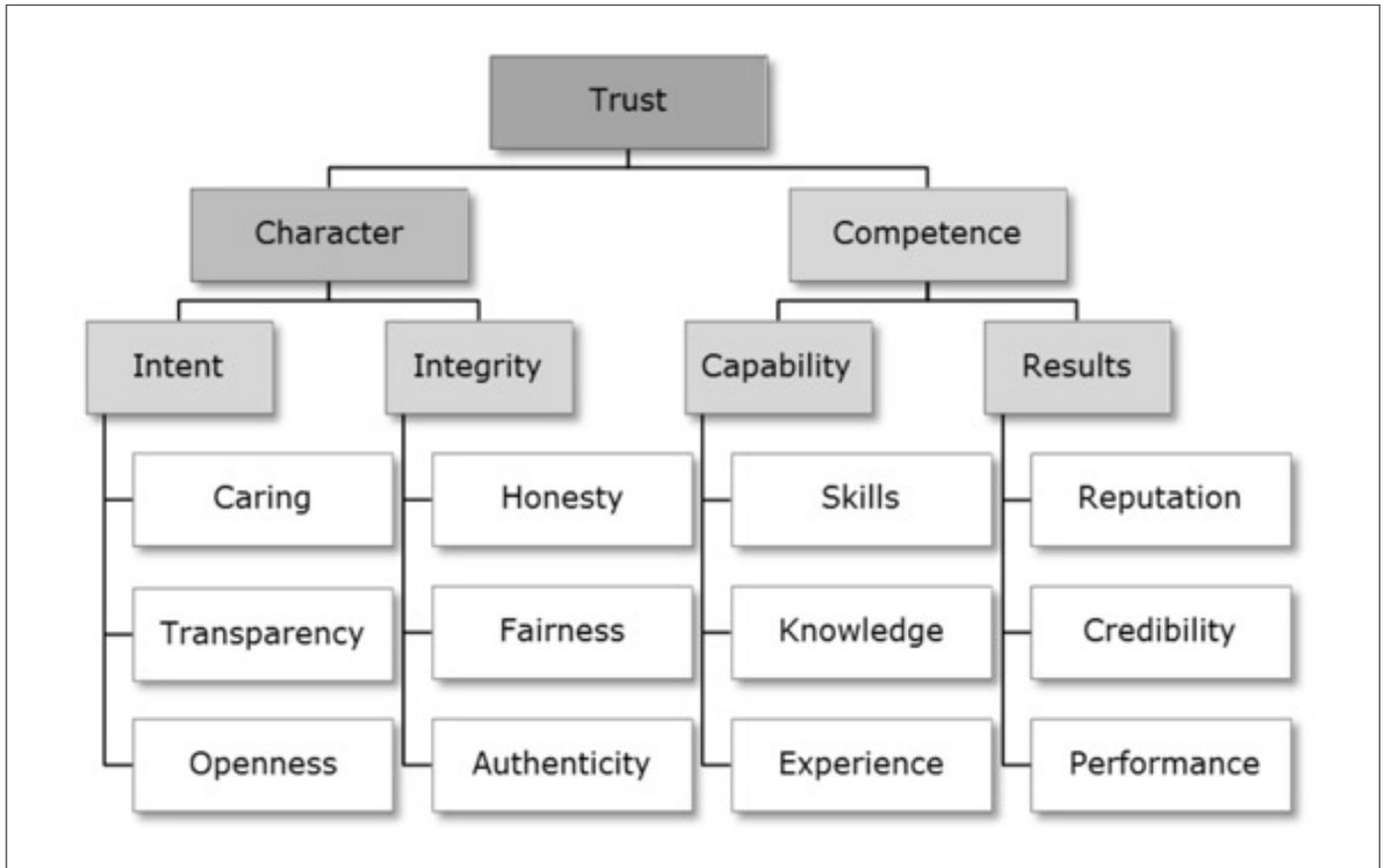


Diagram 2: Barrett’s Trust Matrix. From “The Values-Driven Organization: Cultural Health and Employee Well-Being as a Pathway to Sustainable Performance” (2017) Richard Barrett

On the right side of the trust matrix is competence. Competence is a reflection of who you are on the outside as demonstrated by your skills, knowledge and experience. It is how people perceive your skill or your ability to execute within your expected role. Competence is developed over time through education, training and what you learn through the course of your career.

On the left side of the trust matrix model is character. Character is about who you are on the inside. A reflection of your emotional and relational intelligence as demonstrated by your intent and integrity. It is a measure of the inner work of leadership and reflected in how seen, heard and understood you make others feel. According to Barrett,

whether an individual or an organization, trustworthiness comes down to the interplay of four key factors; intent, integrity, capability and results.

Regardless of the model used, becoming an empowering and inspiring leader also requires learning to trust in yourself. Developing a reflective practice around your leadership, becoming aware of your self-orientation and considering the context or situation in which you are leading are all part of a leader’s ongoing evolution. Are there limiting beliefs or mindsets that prevent you from showing up in alignment with your values? Are you able to set aside your ideas and convictions to get curious and meet people where they are? Are you being

honest about your ambitions and how they align with those of the organization or the people you lead? Do you lack confidence in your ability to lead and need to find more empathy for yourself? And finally, what does the current situation demand of you? Are you able to flex your leadership style depending on the context? Consider these actionable steps as you work to build more trusting relationships within your leadership, your hospital and your community:

1. Choose to believe in the importance and power of trust in ALL your relationships
2. Start with yourself by focusing on developing your character and competence.
3. Declare your intent. Let others know your goals, your intended actions and the why behind them in advance. Be clear and transparent and ensure there are no hidden agendas, both real and assumed.
4. Do what you say you are going to do by following through to carry out your declared intent. In other words, walk your talk.
5. Believe that others have good intentions, are doing their best and want to be trusted. Assume positive intent and leverage curiosity to stay out of judgment.

Leaders who cultivate trust are willing to do the inner work of leadership. They are self-aware, own their actions and work to ensure that how others experience them reflects their authentic self. This requires cutting through the layers of ego we don as protection and accepting our humanity and the humanity of others with grace. Leading from the inside out sets the stage for trust to follow. While it isn't easy, it may well be the most rewarding journey of your life. Are you ready to do the work?

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BEYOND CURIOSITY – A COACH APPROACH TO LEADERSHIP

LEADERSHIP & COACHING

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Traditional leadership models position the leader as the protagonist. The hero whose confidence, courage, strategic thinking, and ability to rally the troops saves a struggling organization. But what if this model of great leadership is flawed? What if visionary leadership isn't about you, the leader, but instead about the people you lead? As leaders in the veterinary profession look to improve staff retention, support professional development and holistically connect organizational health with human health a new model of leadership is needed. Research on the neuroscience of human development supports the positive impact a coach approach to leadership can have on your team and the culture of your hospital. With intention, focus and a deliberate shift to deeper listening, curious questions and mindful responding we can engage and empower others to build a more connected and resilient team.

WHAT EXACTLY IS COACHING?

For many, coaching recalls images of your high school basketball coach shouting from the sidelines, whistle in hand. Sports coaching is a small niche in a diverse and growing profession which includes business, life, leadership and health coaching. Regardless of the label, coaching is one of the most effective methods of developing human potential. It is also a powerful model to help leaders who want to shift away from a "command and control" leadership style to a more "human-centered" approach.

The International Coaching Federation (ICF), a non-profit organization dedicated to establishing a professional code of ethics and standards in the coaching industry, defines coaching as "partnering with an individual in a

thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential". Robert Hargrove, a thought leader in the field of talent development and coaching said "Masterful coaching is about inspiring, empowering and enabling people to live deeply in the future while acting boldly in the present". Finally, my favourite definition comes from Richard Boyatzis who describes coaching as "a helping relationship with the purpose of achieving some type of change, learning or new level of individual or organizational performance". While traditional coaching is often viewed as a one-to-one professional relationship, a coach approach to leadership is accessible to anyone. It is a powerful, positive and future-focused way to support human development, positive change and thriving teams.

HELPING PEOPLE CHANGE

Coaching has broad applications in an organizational setting. From strategic planning and goal setting to developing self-awareness of one's perspectives and limiting beliefs to building mindfulness and appreciation. The impact of coaching is diverse and far-reaching. Whether at an individual level or an organizational level, coaching supports positive change, helping people and organizations grow toward the vision they hold for their future. We need leaders willing to move from telling people what to do and demanding compliance to believing in the capacity and creativity of their team and coaching with compassion. In his book, "Helping People Change", Richard Boyatzis shares that while there may be a time and place for coaching with compliance, research has shown it is unlikely to lead to sustained behaviour change. Considering that 60 to

70% of organizational change initiatives fall short when leaders fail to address the needs of the people going through change, Boyatzis's research holds. Even when a person's life is on the line, behaviour change is unlikely to "stick" when compliance with an external authority or expert is the motivator. Being told you "have to" or "need to" do something is not an effective catalyst for sustainable long-term change. For example, studies of patients following coronary bypass surgery show that on average only 1 out of 9 patients can adopt a healthier lifestyle long term.

Coaching with a compassionate approach to help individuals or teams create a self-defined vision of the future is far more effective in creating sustainable change than coaching for compliance. In his model of intentional change, Boyatzis explores the neuroscience behind this approach. When we coach people for compliance, even when well-intentioned, it often elicits a defensive response from the person we are trying to lead, motivate or change. People experience this as a stress response accompanied by negative emotions and activation of the sympathetic nervous system (SNS). Once activated our SNS triggers a chemical cascade that limits our capacity to learn or change. When we feel threatened – whether a threat to our physical self or a threat to our sense of self – we shut down and go into survival mode. Our brains are also highly attuned to perceived threats to status. In their research, Boyatzis and colleagues found that when participants were evaluated by others and risked a reduction in their status (think performance evaluations by your boss), their cortisol levels remained higher for 50 percent longer than if there was no perceived risk to status. Under the influence of cortisol and other neurotransmitters associated with stress, the brain is less creative, less open to new ideas and less able to think of solutions. As leaders, we may think we are helping people improve their performance but too often we unintentionally trigger a stress response and create conditions that are counter to helping people enact positive change.

Alternatively, Boyatzis found coaching with compassion elicits a very different response. With a focus on an individual's strengths along with a self-defined vision of their future, a leader can stimulate energy, excitement and positive emotions that activate the parasympathetic nervous system setting in motion physiologic responses that put us in a more relaxed and open state. Creativity flows and new neural pathways can form in the brain, paving the way for new learning and sustained behaviour change.

While this is a simplified explanation based on three decades of research into Intentional Change Theory, the bottom line is this – "telling people what to do, even when it is with their best interests at heart, rarely creates long-term, sustainable change".

TRANSFORMING CULTURE WITH A COACH APPROACH

When it comes to cultural transformation, organizations don't transform, the people within the organization do. People are at the heart of any organization. Leaders need not only a strategy, they need a deeper understanding of what motivates employees, an inspiring shared vision and tools to empower their team and create a sense of belonging and connection. In the recent publication of the American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA), "Stay Please: A Challenge to the Veterinary Profession to Improve Employee Retention" authors seek to better understand and fulfill the needs and desires of people who support and care for animals. If we want people to stay in the veterinary profession, we need to create an environment that meets their needs. Based on their research and taking a cue from Maslow's hierarchy of needs, AAHA created the veterinary hierarchy of needs shown below.



Figure 1: The Veterinary Hierarchy of Needs. From AAHA's publication "Stay Please: Factors that support retention and drive attrition" 2023.

From ensuring employees feel valued and appreciated to improving collaboration and team cohesion a coach approach to leadership supports the hierarchy of needs at multiple levels. Coaching offers simple, powerful tools to build a sense of belonging, meaning and support to create a culture that cares for the caregiver.

$$\text{Caring for people} = \uparrow \text{Employee engagement} + \uparrow \text{Job satisfaction} + \downarrow \text{Turnover} = \uparrow \text{Profits}$$

THREE KEY MINDSETS

So how exactly do we apply lessons from the coaching profession to leadership in veterinary practices? It should be noted anyone in a position of influence should commit to developing a coaching style to help develop and support team members and improve relationships within the practice. Coaching is a collaborative process grounded in humility and curiosity where each individual is seen as fully capable and an expert in their role and life. Rather than being an expert or advice giver, a leader as

coach is a partner, a guide and a cheerleader. Three key mindsets offer a solid foundation from which to grow a more coach-like approach to leading your team.

1. **Assume positive intent:** No one wants to be terrible at their job. People want to do their best. They want to succeed and feel accomplished in their role. Consider what happens when a leader believes people want to show up enthusiastic, dedicated to the practice mission and willing to do their best work. Assuming positive intent changes

your whole approach to a person or a problem. When you assume negative intent, you're likely to become angry, frustrated or annoyed. Assuming positive intent allows you to set aside this frustration, become more curious, and listen more generously. It allows you to look past the behaviour or immediate challenge and understand what is really going on. Practice giving people the benefit of the doubt and creating a space for possibility to emerge.

- 2. Believe in human possibility:** Giving people a possibility to live into instead of an expectation to live up to is a small shift in mindset that can have far-reaching impacts. The Pygmalion effect describes a psychological phenomenon where high expectations lead to improved performance in a given area and low expectations to poorer performance. Education research has consistently shown that teachers' expectations have powerful effects on student academic achievement. One of the earliest studies by Rosenthal and Jacobsen demonstrated this effect. When elementary teachers were told certain students in their classroom had been identified as "intellectual bloomers". Results of the study showed that the "bloomers" performed higher on year-end intellectual tests. Rosenthal and Jacobsen concluded that teachers' expectations about students, even when based on arbitrary information, influenced student achievement. Believing people are capable, resourceful and whole is a key tenant of a coaching mindset. Consider what might shift when this mindset is applied to all members of your team.
- 3. Engage your curiosity:** As we lead our teams in times of complexity, uncertainty and ambiguity, we need to let go of the belief that leaders must have all the answers. Instead, we can focus on asking better questions that draw on the collective knowledge of our entire team. In veterinary medicine, we are experts at diagnosing disease (a problem) and creating a treatment plan (the solutions). It is natural to apply this approach to our leadership. Trained as experts, we think we must have all the answers. But consider the times you assumed you knew a patient's diagnosis only

to be proven wrong once you received the lab report. Curiosity and questions are a leader's diagnostic tools. By taking time to ask the right questions, listen and respond thoughtfully, we can engage our team in a more empowering approach that builds confidence, improves client and patient outcomes and fosters a culture of collaboration.

Let's look at a simple coaching framework any leader, at any level, can use to leverage the positive benefits of a coach approach to leadership.

THE ALR FRAMEWORK: ASK – LISTEN – RESPOND

A is for Ask: How might we ask questions that are deeply curious to increase understanding and open possibility? Organizational psychologist, Adam Grant, suggests thinking like a scientist can help us ask better questions. He suggests we view our opinions, ideas or beliefs as a hypothesis. For example, if our belief is "Changing the scope of practice for RVT's will solve the veterinary workforce shortage" viewing this belief as a hypothesis becomes "Can changing the scope of practice for RVT's solve the veterinary workforce shortage?". Generally, we are very attached to our opinions, ideas and beliefs and often set out looking for evidence that supports them. This approach can narrow our view making us resistant to other opinions, beliefs and ideas and set on proving the "rightness" of our idea. By framing them as a hypothesis we can more easily let go of our attachment to an idea and become more open to other perspectives and potentially being proven wrong. When you feel ready to jump in with your opinion or offer your advice, take a breath, pause and practice asking an open-ended question instead.

L is for Listen: According to Lee and Hatesohl at the University of Missouri-Columbia, most of us spend 70 to 80 percent of our time in some form of communication. Studies show on average 9 percent of that time is spent writing, 16 percent reading, 30 percent speaking, and 45 percent listening. While listening forms a large percentage of our communication skills, most of us are inefficient listeners and we receive little formal training to develop our listening skills. Part of the problem is our brain connects ideas faster than we can speak. The average person talks at about 225 words per minute but we have the mental capacity to understand someone speaking at up to 400 words per minute. This leaves our

minds free to wander. If we don't make a focused effort to concentrate and continually bring ourselves back to listening our minds move on to other ideas. It can be very difficult to quiet our busy minds and often we don't hear what the other person is saying or feeling because we are filtering it through our own immediate concerns. Add to this our time-crunched schedules and distractions like cell phones and good listening becomes even more challenging. In one study, authors found that "simply knowing our phone might ring can reduce our cognition skills by up to 20 percent". Paying attention, it seems is becoming an increasingly rare commodity.

Becoming better listeners is foundational to building more human-centered workplaces. In our busy hospitals committed listening gives others a precious gift – the gift of your time and full attention. Committed listening is about bringing yourself to the conversation AND being fully present for the other person. Giving someone your full attention, not talking over them or interrupting and being curious about the why behind their words. Committed listening creates a safe and respectful environment for further communication. When we listen better, we gain clarity, jump to fewer assumptions and our relationships improve.

The Chinese character for "to listen" is a beautiful reminder that listening well is a full-body experience requiring us to use our:

- ears to hear both the words and the pace and tone in which they are delivered
- eyes to notice facial expressions and body language
- heart to notice what is felt, the emotion and what is being communicated without words
- attention to be fully present or "undivided"



Figure 2: The Chinese character for "to listen". From US State Department Archives on Active Listening.

R is for Respond: After engaging our curiosity, asking good questions and practicing committed listening the final step in the ALR Framework is to respond. How can we express our thoughts, ideas or advice (when appropriate) mindfully, intentionally and generously? For many of us, this can be the most challenging step, especially in more emotionally charged conversations or those where we have a strong attachment to our ideas or beliefs. Remember the neuroscience behind our reactions. Our brains are wired to recognize threats – both physical and emotional – and activate our SNS in preparation to react to the threat. We also place more weight on negative experiences and emotions as a way to learn and protect ourselves from real dangers. Our SNS and our negativity bias are part of being human but so is our ability to build new habits and create new neural connections to respond intentionally and thoughtfully. Like learning any new skill, it requires motivation to change, repeated practice to reinforce the new neural pathways and time. Start by paying attention to what happens in your body when your SNS or negativity bias is activated. Learn to pause and employ mindfulness techniques to engage the PNS. Notice your focus widens, your ability to think more creatively expands and your ability to respond (not react) develops. Remember to be kind to yourself when you slip back into old patterns, developing new habits is challenging but the rewards for both you and your team of showing up as a grounded, respectful and thoughtful leader are well worth the effort.

"Between a stimulus and a response lies a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom"

– Victor Frankl

A coach approach to leadership invites collaboration and moves us from being right to getting it right. Creating a space for belonging, engagement and deeper connections on our teams. Our practices are part of a bigger ecosystem. Similar to a forest, made up of thousands of individual trees, most of us spend our days focused on the individual trees, failing to appreciate the connections and interdependence that ensures the forest thrives. In our busy professional lives, an endless list of demands competes for our time. The immediate challenges we face each day make it difficult to focus on the future. Small shifts in the way we lead can, over time,

have big impacts on the people in our organizations, client satisfaction, patient outcomes and the profitability of our practice. It is time for a more human-centered approach to leadership. It is time for a coach approach!

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WHY CURIOSITY SHOULD BE YOUR SUPERPOWER

LEADERSHIP & COACHING

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A CULTURE OF CONNECTION

We live in interesting times. An age where we can connect with people around the world with the click of a mouse. Where people living in the remotest places on the planet carry a computer in their back pocket that connects them with the rest of the world. Yet despite the ease with which we can “connect” with each other, research points to a growing sense of disconnection along with increasing, isolation, loneliness and polarization in society. In May 2023, the U.S. surgeon general released an advisory calling attention to the crisis of loneliness, isolation and lack of connection, saying: “At work, loneliness reduces task performance, limits creativity and impairs other aspects of executive function such as reasoning and decision making. For our health and our work, it is imperative that we address the loneliness epidemic quickly.” The advisory went on to outline the importance of cultivating a culture of connection.

What exactly is a culture of connection? The desire to be part of a group is more than just a nice thing to have, it is embedded in our DNA as an essential human need. For me, the key to improving the wellbeing of people in veterinary medicine and creating cultures that support human flourishing lies in finding our way back to being together, in community. While this idea may seem either obvious or intangible depending on your perspective, it starts with focusing on people, one relationship at a time.

OUR BRAINS ARE NOT THE SAME

Each of us carries a unique sense making machine inside our skulls. A ball of neurons designed to collect information from the environment along with data from the body and make the best decision about what to do next.

Anatomically our brains look pretty similar but appearances are where it ends. Adding to your brain’s complexity is the influence of culture, upbringing, experiences and the specific tasks we ask it to perform. All of these influences shape your brain and help it adapt based on what is needed. Your brain is a complicated piece of machinery that not only controls all your bodily functions and keeps you alive, it also makes you uniquely you!

Our brains are connection making machines. David Rock, author of Quiet Leadership and Coaching with the Brain in Mind says “the underlying functionality of our brain is one of finding associations, connections and links between bits of information. Our thoughts, memories, skills and attributes are vast sets of connections or maps joined together through complex chemical and physical pathways”. Our brains are made up of layers upon layers of these maps or neural pathways. Everything we do, every thought we have and every skill we learn has a complex neural pathway associated with it. As a cyclist, I like to think of these pathways like the winding layers of mountain biking trails in my town. Some of them I am familiar with and others I am not. When I find myself facing a fork in the trail and feel lost, in a fraction of a second my brain looks at where I am and compares it to the existing maps in my head. If it can find connections, it creates a new “map” that literally becomes part of my brain’s neural pathways. If I ride that trail repeatedly, eventually I no longer have to think about which way to turn, it is wired into my brain. The more hardwired these “neural mountain biking maps” become the more space I free up in my brain’s working memory, making room for higher level tasks. In order to deal with all the information our brain needs to process, it takes shortcuts and prunes unnecessary information to create order, organize data

and help our lives make sense. These shortcuts mean we sometimes make up stories to fill in the gaps or connect missing pieces of information. Sometimes the stories we make up are correct but often they are prone to mistakes that can lead to misunderstandings and incorrect assumptions. Despite how amazing our brains are, they cannot possibly understand what is going on in the brain of the person sitting across from us. There is only one sure way to understand what another brain is thinking – ask it!

THE CHALLENGE TO BEING CURIOUS

What does all this have to do with making curiosity our superpower? Getting curious and asking questions helps us slow down and gather more information before we make assumptions or worse yet judgements about a person or a situation. It delays the rush to give advice and take action. This is at the heart of why being curious is so challenging. We live in a culture that values doing and where busyness is not only a reality for most of us, it is sometimes seen as a badge of honour. Who has time to ask questions? And, let's be honest, we all love to give advice. Giving advice makes us feel knowledgeable, valuable and needed by others, but does it really work? Do people want our advice and how likely are they to apply it to their challenge and find a solution? Research in the field of neuroscience and human development shows that giving advice and telling someone what they should do rarely works when it comes to developing skills or changing behaviour. The long term value of advice giving can be summed up in the saying "If you give a man a fish, you feed him for a day. If you teach a man to fish, you feed him for a lifetime". If giving advice is not helpful and counterproductive, why is it often our default behaviour as leaders?

THE PROBLEM WITH GIVING ADVICE

Michael Bungay Stanier author of "The Advice Trap: Be Humble, Stay Curious and Change the Way You Lead Forever", a thought leader in coaching and organizational development, calls this deeply engrained desire to give advice our "Advice Monster". The problem, he says, is not with advice itself but when giving advice becomes our default response. Giving advice has three specific challenges or pitfalls leaders need to consider if they hope to become more coach-like in their approach.

1. Are you solving the right problem? Our eagerness to give advice means we jump to solutions before we fully understand the problem. As a result, we may end up wasting time and solving the wrong problem.
2. How good is your advice? We all like to think we are rational, logical and our advice adds value. Research into cognitive bias proves us wrong. Remember how your brain likes to simplify information processing and take shortcuts? Our advice is influenced by the lens through which we view the world. Your advice is actually an opinion and not necessarily as valuable as we believe it to be!
3. What message are you really sending? Giving advice disempowers the receiver by sending a subtle message that they are not smart enough or capable of solving this problem on their own. While this is often unintentional, it erodes their sense of competence, confidence and autonomy. Over time it can make them dependent on the advice giver.
4. What do you really want for yourself and for those you lead? Allowing your Advice Monster to roam unchecked may mean you are taking on responsibilities that actually are not yours to take on and you might be setting yourself up for frustration, resentment and exhaustion. Ask yourself honestly, do you really want to be the person that has all the answers, fixes all the problems and saves everyone?

WHAT IS YOUR ADVICE MONSTER?

Reflecting on how the Advice Monster shows up for you is the first step in taming it. Our Advice Monster likes to take on a few different personas:

1. Tell-It: The Tell-It Advice Monster loves the spotlight and likes to speak with authority, seniority and wisdom to convince others that it knows best. Tell-It is here to convince you that you must have the answer. You were hired to have the answer and it is only by having the answer that you add value to the organization and will be recognized as a success. The Tell-It monster wants you to believe if you don't give advice, nothing will get solved and we will fail.
2. Save-It: The Save-it monster has convinced you your only job is to rescue everyone. Save-It often hides

behind a veneer of being helpful and is kicked into overdrive when there is the potential for conflict. When in doubt, the Save-It monster tells you to take it on yourself because it is too hard to watch others struggle. It can smell like a martyr and wants you to believe you must be responsible for all and rescue everyone or the team will fail.

3. Control-It: The Control-It monster will quietly convince you that the only way to succeed is to stay in control at all times. It whispers in your ear: don't trust anyone, don't share power, don't cede control because if you slip, disaster awaits. It seduces you with the grandeur of what is possible if only you stay vigilant and carefully control EVERYTHING!

HOW TO TAME YOUR ADVICE MONSTER

Regardless of the persona it assumes, when the Advice Monster is in control, you are feeding the narrative that you are better, smarter and have the best solutions – while the other person is not smart enough, experienced enough, moral enough or capable enough to make the right decision and solve the problem on their own.

AND if that isn't a tough enough pill to swallow – allowing the Advice Monster to gain control, makes it easier to set aside your empathy, compassion and vulnerability. Allowing you to use your answers as a shield against the very thing that builds connection and community. The very things that contribute to a team's wellbeing - empathy, compassion and vulnerability. According to Michael Bungay Stanier, the key to taming this beast is to replace your advice-giving habit with something else - curiosity. Or in his words to "stay curious a little bit longer". When you feel the Tame-It, the Save-It or the Control-It monsters about to hijack your voice – slow down, take a deep breath and ask a question.

QUESTIONS TO HELP YOU GET CURIOUS IN (ALMOST) ANY SITUATION

Beyond keeping the Advice Monster at bay, questions help us understand and empathize with others. At the most basic level, asking a question shows your interest and is an invitation to share thoughts, perspectives, stories and feelings. The better the question, the better the invitation and the more likely you are to develop a

deeper understanding or build your relationship. Warren Berger, author of "The Book of Beautiful Questions" says because questioning is such an effective tool for connecting with others, it should be seen as a critical leadership skill. Like Bungay Stanier, Berger agrees that when we "shift away from advising, criticizing, opining – and toward the direction of asking and listening" a powerful change occurs. The shift to "asking mode" can even transform adversarial relationships". While any question will slow us down and delay the rush to advice giving, what are some of the key ingredients of great questions? Questions designed to increase understanding, build connection and support the development of those lead are crafted to:

- Be open ended – simple, not leading, open to the listeners interpretation
- Stimulate positive emotions – positive emotions move us out of our sympathetic nervous system into the parasympathetic nervous system where we can think creatively and share expansively
- Be generous and generative – the question invites honesty, dignity and revelation
- Connect with the relationship and offered with humility and empathy

A FINAL PIECE OF ADVICE (YES, THERE ARE TIMES WHERE ADVICE GIVING IS OKAY)

Staying curious a little longer and avoiding telling others what they should do is a healthy habit we all need to work on but you may be wondering if there is ever a time where giving advice is appropriate? The answer is yes, and... If you truly believe your expertise is needed or will help avoid undesirable outcomes that might result from self-directed learning remember to ask permission before unleashing your Advice Monster. Then, if the response to your offer of advice is "Yes, please", share it as a perspective rather than a directive. For example:

"I can see how this challenge has you stuck. Would you like to hear my thoughts?"

Then:

"I wonder what might happen if____ (insert your idea here) _____".

Curious questions asked with positive intent and a desire to not only understand but truly see the human being across from you is a super power we can learn to leverage. Becoming more curious is a small change that can have a huge impact on the way those around us feel, and as a result, behave. A shift that empowers others to increase engagement, ownership and confidence and which extends beyond the individual to the entire team supporting deeper connection and a community of human thriving.

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2004

THE POWER OF PAUSE – SLOW DOWN AND SUPERCHARGE YOUR LEADERSHIP

LEADERSHIP & COACHING

 Elaine Klemmensen, DVM, CEC | Founder, Evolve Leadership Coaching & Consulting

For busy veterinary professionals, time is a precious commodity. Too often we spend our days racing against the clock to check off all the items on our “to-do” list. This can leave us stressed and depleted at day’s end – trapped in a time paradigm. What if we shifted from managing time to managing energy? Research from the world of neuroscience offers powerful insights into the way our brains work along with the benefits of slowing down and “embracing the pause” as a way to replenish our energy and develop a more sustainable path forward for veterinary medicine.

CHALLENGING OUR BELIEFS

We live in a culture where busyness and doing are not only valued but often worn like a badge of honour and used as a way to measure success. While it is bad form to brag about our achievements or talk about income, sharing how “busy” we are is a socially acceptable way to let people know you are successful. We believe the path to success is a simple formula of do, do, do until you eventually have what you desire and then you can afford to take time to rest and enjoy just being. While success is certainly dependent on determination, focus and a willingness to work hard (along with the circumstances you were born into and a certain degree of luck) perhaps it is time to revisit how well this focus on busyness and constantly doing is serving us. In her book, *Mastering Community*, Christine Porath shares the story of Jen Fisher, a senior marketing coordinator at Deloitte. Jen loved her work and was learning and growing in her role at Deloitte. She was willing to work anywhere, at any time, without boundaries, often logging 19-hour days. She managed to set aside time for exercise but little else. Over time the long hours along with her singular focus on work eventually had a toll. It took Jen a long time to admit she

was struggling with burnout. Reflecting on her journey she succinctly shared her thoughts on our culture of busyness saying, “Burnout is not the price you have to pay for success. To create a more meaningful life, you have to remove your badge of busyness”.

Research has found that peak performers like elite athletes, musicians and top CEOs work in sprints and breaks, making dedicated time to recharge and replenish their energy a priority. The belief that time in equals productivity out, or that the hours we put into work have a reciprocal relationship with how much we achieve, is being called into question by recent research. Time spent working and productivity are not a 1:1 relationship. As society moved from farms to factories in the industrial era to complex cognitive work in the knowledge economy, the demands on our bodies and brains changed. Studies suggest the human brain can only hold focus for 90 to 120 minutes before it has an increased urge for distraction. You know the feeling, when you have a sudden urge to check your phone. This is when your brain is telling you it needs a break. A restorative break, not mindless social media scrolling which is a distraction but not restorative.

We often treat our bodies like machines and fail to recognize that like a machine, our bodies will fail if we neglect to care for and maintain them. Our brains, which power the machine of our body, also need time for rest and repair. Start thinking of your brain like a battery that needs scheduled breaks to replenish and recharge. What activities deplete and what activities restore your vital battery? Before we explore this question, let’s take a deeper look at how our brains work and why making space to pause is vital to our health, productivity and our ability to lead well.

THE DEFAULT MODE NETWORK

Our brain, while only 2 percent of our body weight, uses 20 percent of our energy resources at any given time. For many years scientists disregarded the idea that the brain might be productive during downtime (relaxing or sleeping). With the advent of functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) in the early 1990's our understanding of what happens when our brain is at rest deepened. In 2001 Marcus Raichle and colleagues discovered a particular set of scattered brain regions that consistently became less active when participants concentrated on a mental challenge. These same regions however began to fire in synchrony when the participants were relaxing and letting their thoughts wander. Eventually, this complex neural network or circuit that stirred to life when people were daydreaming became known as the default mode network (DMN). It is believed to be one of several different resting-state networks in our brains including circuits for hearing, vision, movement, attention and memory. Research into these mysterious and important circuits is an emerging science with the DMN being the most widely studied.

The DMN, responsible for a massive amount of unconscious processing, is active when we are in a resting state, not engaged in any demanding, externally oriented mental task. Think of the moments in your day when you let your mind wander. For example, when you are walking the dog and find yourself contemplating a future vacation, or thinking about an interaction at work and wondering what was going on in your co-worker's head. Times when your body is otherwise preoccupied and your mind can go into autopilot mode. In contrast the task positive network (TPN), also called the executive control network, kicks in when we ask our brain to focus on external demands requiring higher cognitive function and focus like solving a calculus equation or when we are engaged in a task-specific activity like surgery.

The DMN could also be called our narrative network. A 2007 study called "Mindfulness meditation reveals distinct neural modes of self-reference", by Norman Farb and six other researchers at the University of Toronto, sought to understand how human beings experience their life moment to moment. Their study explored the two distinct ways people have of interacting with and making sense of the world. Farb described the DMN as our narrative circuitry. It is active when you think about

yourself or other people and it holds together our "story line". This network is taking information from the outside world and filtering it through our interpretations to make sense of ourselves, our history, and the people we know and weave all of this information into a giant tapestry that makes sense to us. In most instances, the DMN is acting without our conscious awareness.

We also experience the world through our TPN or direct experience network when we ask our brain to focus on solving a complex calculus problem or turn our focus to information coming into our senses in real-time. An example that illustrates these two networks at work is when you are scrubbing for a surgical procedure and find your mind wandering from the immediate surgery to the conversation you just had with a client and then on to think about what you are going to make for dinner. Your DMN is activated. If you pause and shift your focus to notice the feel of the soap on your skin or the temperature of the water as flowing over your hands, your brain is now in direct experience mode or TPN.

It appears that these two networks function alternately – one or the other – but not simultaneously. Demands that require engagement of the TPN simultaneously deactivate the DMN. Think of it like a toggle switch where our brain flips back and forth between these modes. When our TPN or executive mode is engaged, it uses a lot of energy and drains our battery. When we flip the switch and the DMN takes over it gives our brain a break, time to recharge and the space to create new connections and make sense of our world.

You may be wondering, so what? This is interesting but what does it have to do with the importance of rest, renewal and leadership? I invite you to stop reading and take a break for 2 to 3 minutes. Perhaps you want to stand up and stretch for 2 minutes. Maybe you will grab a toy and play tug of war with your dog for 3 minutes. Or perhaps you will step outside and feel the sun on your face and listen to the birds. When you return to reading, take a moment to check in and note how you feel.

Even a 1-minute break that toggles the switch over to your DMN has cognitive benefits that make a meaningful difference in your ability to focus productively. In a study of 20,000 employees by Tom Schwartz of the Energy Project and Christine Porath Associate Professor of Management at the McDonough School of Business at Georgetown

University, “employees experienced a positive performance boost from each break they took during the day with those who took a break approximately every 90 minutes reporting a nearly 30% higher level of focus across the day”. While at first glance this may seem unrealistic in our busy, overbooked veterinary practices consider the benefits of improved focus on both team productivity and patient outcomes if we could leverage this benefit. How might we incorporate thoughtful microbreaks that engage the DMN and recharge our brains into our workday?

In addition to recharging our focus, the ability to toggle between the two networks enhances the richness of incoming data and helps us get closer to the reality of any event than relying only on our DMN or narrative circuits

(the story we are telling ourselves as we make sense of the world). Shifting into the direct experience, or TPN, allows us to perceive more information and gather more accurate information about events happening around us. Noticing more in real-time makes us more flexible in how we respond to the world and people around us. Experts have found that with practice and attention, learning to activate the toggle and shift into direct experience mode can help us respond more mindfully to events as they unfold. Over time becoming less imprisoned by our past, habits, assumptions and expectations and can be more open to new ideas and opinions. Teaching and developing this skill to all team members can have a positive impact on interpersonal dynamics.

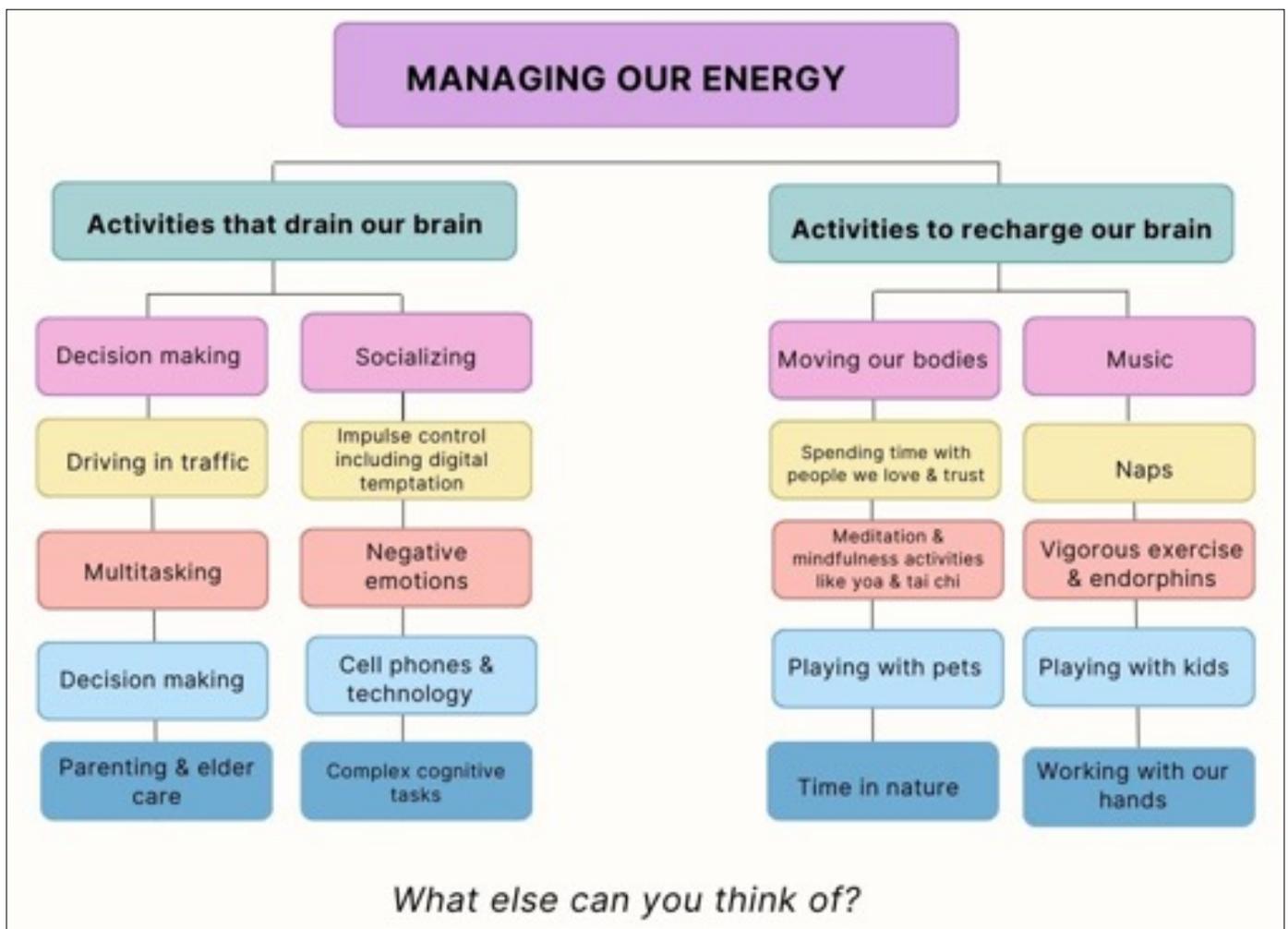


Figure 1: Original diagram inspired by International Coaching Federation webinar with James Garret on “Brain Science for Coaches”

RETHINKING OUR HOSPITALS

Organizations across all industries are at an important crossroads and veterinary medicine is not unique in its challenge to attract and retain top talent. We need to move past seeing wellbeing as a marketing tool to attract new people and recognize the bigger impact on our community and our society when people are tuning out, burning out and walking out. If we fail to support employee wellbeing, we are failing to optimize people's potential, ultimately affecting our financial bottom line. We need a holistic approach where wellbeing is embedded in the strategic plan, hospital policies and procedures so that it becomes culturally normalized or part of "the way we do things around here".

What are practical ways we can normalize and embed wellbeing into our day-to-day practices at work?

What policies are in direct opposition to employee wellbeing?

How well do your hospital's leaders model healthy behaviours and choices?

What can we learn from other organizations that have created healthier, human-centered workplaces that prioritize wellbeing?

How can we think creatively to find innovative NEW ways of managing our teams that make space for rest and renewal?

In veterinary medicine, wellbeing is not a one-size-fits-all strategy. Perhaps, before we can shift our culture to one of wellbeing, we need to broaden the current model of success from one that celebrates doing and busyness to one that recognizes the power of the pause. What small steps can you take today to make recharging a sustainable practice for both yourself and your team?

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3001

CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE VETERINARY PROFESSION

CARBON LITERACY & SUSTAINABILITY

 Jen Gale, BVetMed | Carbon Literacy Trainer and Founder of Sustainable(ish)

CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE VETERINARY PROFESSION

Jen Gale BVetMed MRCVS
Sustainable(ish)

[WWW.SUSTAINABLE\(ISH\).CO.UK](http://WWW.SUSTAINABLE(ISH).CO.UK)

1

- What is climate change?
- What is causing the climate change?
- How is the veterinary profession contributing to climate change?
- The impacts of climate change
- The impacts of climate change on the veterinary profession

2



- Small animal vet
- Founder of Sustainable(ish)
- Sustainability coach, author, podcaster and speaker
- Carbon Literacy Trainer
- Vet Sustain Director and member of Vet Sustain's Greener Veterinary Practice Working Group



3

WHAT IS CLIMATE CHANGE?

“Climate change refers to a large-scale, long-term shift in the planet's weather patterns and average temperatures.”
UK Met Office

4

<p>WEATHER</p> <p>- What you see when you look out of the window eg wind, rain, snow etc - Hours/days</p> 	<p>Vs</p>	<p>CLIMATE</p> <p>- The weather conditions that are expected in a region at a particular time of year - Years/decades</p> 
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“Climate is what we expect, weather is what we get.”
Robert A. Heinlein

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**CLIMATE CHANGE
GLOBAL WARMING
=
CLIMATE CRISIS
CLIMATE EMERGENCY
CLIMATE BREAKDOWN
GLOBAL HEATING**

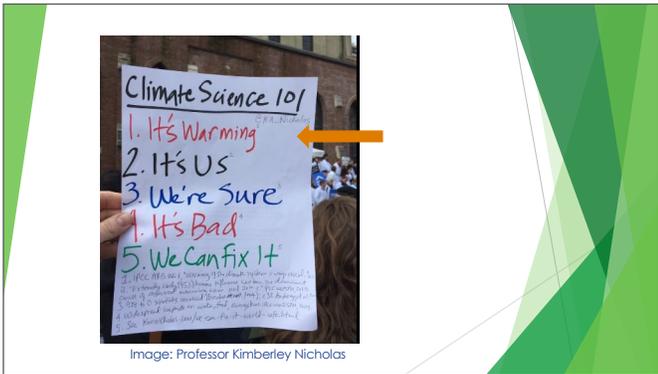
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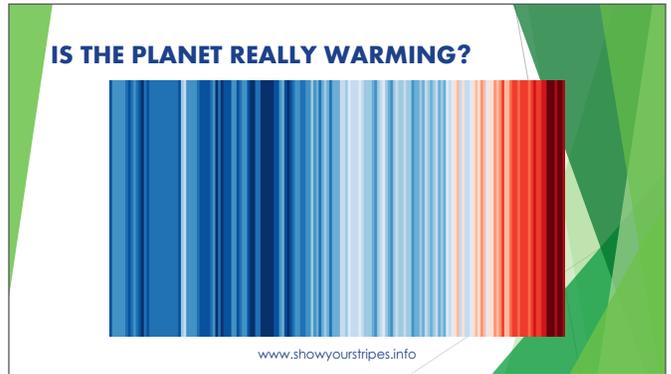
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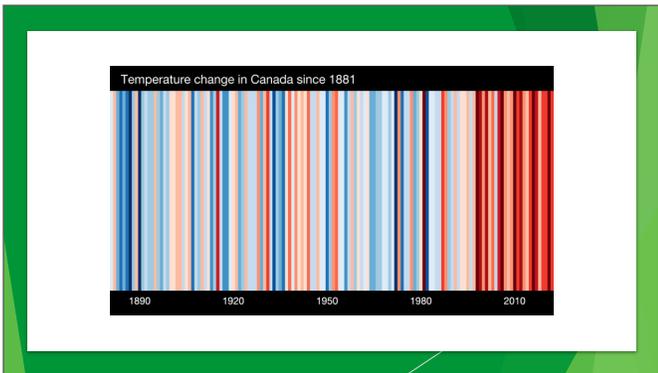
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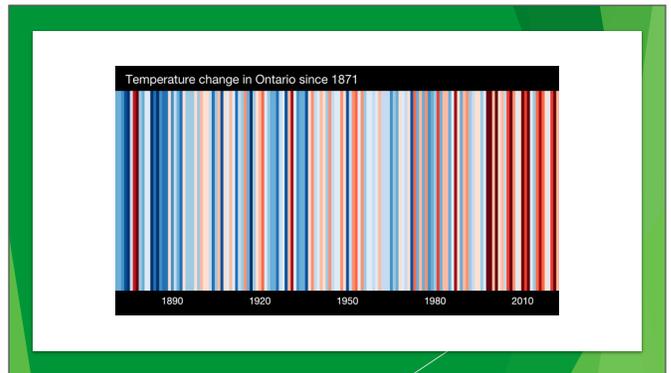
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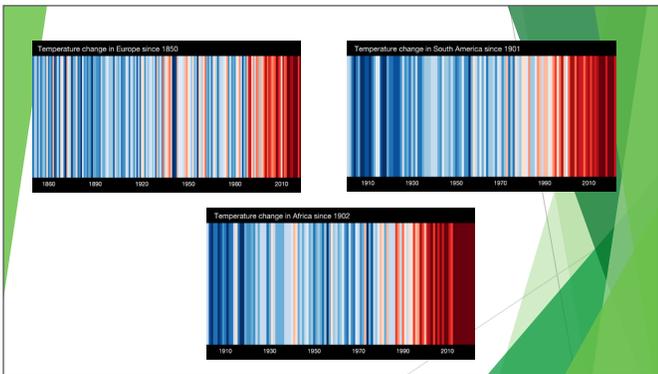
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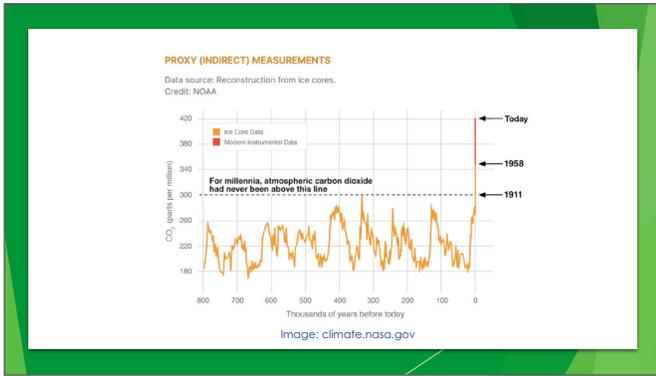
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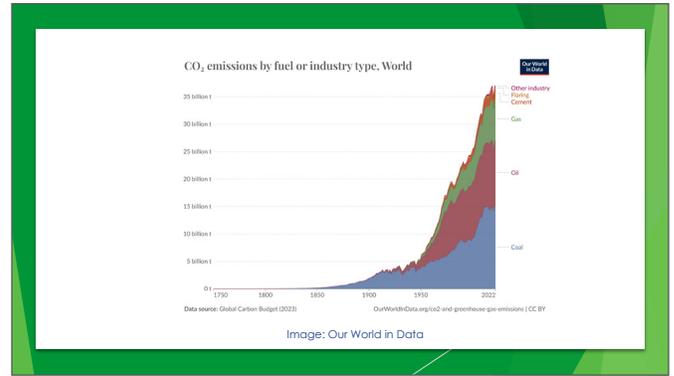
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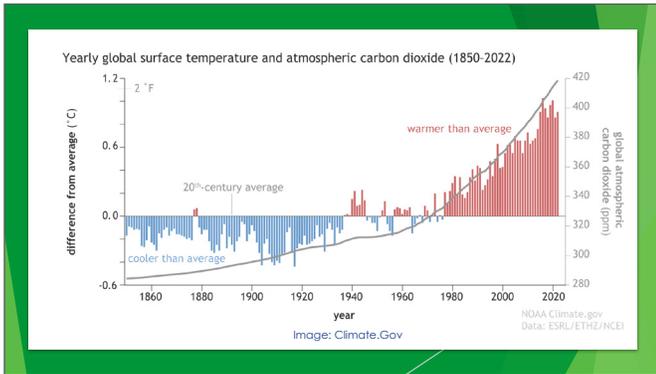
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HOW MUCH HAS THE EARTH ALREADY WARMED, COMPARED TO PRE-INDUSTRIAL LEVELS?

Join at menti.com | Use code 1283 0290

0.5C 1.2C 1.5C 2C

Account
Content
Design
Settings

18

BUT IT'S NOT JUST CARBON DIOXIDE...

19

What are the main greenhouse gases?

0 responses

Account
Content
Design
Settings
Help &

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THE MAIN GREENHOUSE GASES

Water vapour	carbon dioxide	methane	nitrous oxide	F gases
Carbon dioxide (CO ₂)	CO ₂	CH ₄	N ₂ O	(various)
Methane (CH ₄)				
Nitrous Oxide (N ₂ O)	1	25	298	10s-10,000s
F-gases	Global warming potentials			

21

WHERE DO THEY COME FROM?

22

carbon dioxide CO₂

- CEMENT
- FOSIL FUELS
- NATURAL GAS

methane CH₄

- LANDFILL (DEBRIS)
- FOOD WASTE
- CANVASES

nitrous oxide N₂O

- INDUSTRIAL PROCESSES
- AGRICULTURE (MANURE)

F gases (various)

- REFRIGERATION
- AIR CON
- ANESTHETIC GASES (ISO ETC)

23

THE CARBON FOOTPRINT OF ANIMALS UNDER OUR CARE

SPECIES	AVERAGE TOTAL CARBON FOOTPRINT OF ALL THE ANIMALS UNDER THE CARE OF EACH VET PER YEAR
EQUINE	524 tonnes CO ₂ e per vet per year
DOGS AND CATS	1,000 tonnes CO ₂ e per vet per year
SHEEP	7,800 tonnes CO ₂ e per vet per year
DAIRY CATTLE	24,000 tonnes CO ₂ e per vet per year
PIGS	27,000 tonnes CO ₂ e per vet per year
BEEF CATTLE	30,000 tonnes CO ₂ e per vet per year
FARMED FISH	36,000 tonnes CO ₂ e per vet per year
POULTRY	99,000 tonnes CO ₂ e per vet per year

Andrew Prentis
www.veterinary-practice.com/article/the-carbon-footprint-of-the-animals-under-our-care

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Greenhouse Effect Normal CO₂

- Less heat trapped in atmosphere
- More heat escapes into space

Greenhouse Effect: Rampant CO₂

- More heat trapped in atmosphere
- Less heat escapes into space
- More Greenhouse Gases

Image: www.nps.gov

25

Climate Science 101

1. It's Warming
2. It's US
3. We're Sure
4. It's Bad
5. We Can Fix It

Image: Professor Kimberley Nicholas

26

SCIENTIFIC CONSENSUS

- 1995 IPCC report: a "discernible" human influence on global climate
- 2007 IPCC report: human activity "very likely" to be influencing global climate
- 2013 IPCC report: human activity "extremely likely" to be influencing global climate
- 2021 IPCC report: "It is unequivocal that human influence has warmed the atmosphere, ocean and land"

IPCC
= Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

The United Nations body for assessing the science related to climate change. Created in 1988. The objective of the IPCC is to provide governments at all levels with scientific information that they can use to develop climate policies.

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CORNELL CHRONICLE

More than 99.9% of studies agree: Humans caused climate change

www.news.cornell.edu/stories/2021/10/more-999-studies-agree-humans-caused-climate-change

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Climate Science 101

1. It's Warming
2. It's US
3. We're Sure
4. It's Bad
5. We Can Fix It

Image: Professor Kimberley Nicholas

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NEWS

World's first year-long breach of key 1.5C warming limit

www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-68110310

30

www.carbonbrief.org/mapped-how-climate-change-affects-extreme-weather-around-the-world/

31

'Drought is on the verge of becoming the next pandemic'

Global heating likely to hit world food supply before 1.5C, says UN expert

Third of staff laid off at major New Zealand ski field as warm winter leaves slopes barren

'We can't escape': climate crisis is driving up cost of living in the US west

Fires, floods and disappearing beaches can Mediterranean holidays survive?

Fears many Australians will abandon home insurance as premiums jump 50% in high-risk areas

Network Rail to spend £2.8bn to cope with effects of climate crisis

Mosquito-borne diseases becoming increasing risk in Europe

32

Image: global-tipping-points.org/summary-report/section-1/

33

Know the signs of heatstroke

Severe heatwaves show the need to adapt livestock management for climate

DID YOU KNOW

34

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WE CAN USE OUR UNIQUE POSITION

Vet Sustain **Vets can influence climate change** **VetSalus**

ONE HEALTH, ONE WELFARE

36

The RCVS Code of Professional Conduct 6.1: "Veterinary surgeons must seek to ensure the protection of public health and animal health and welfare and must consider the impact of their actions on the environment." (RCVS, n.d.)

www.rcvs.org.uk/setting-standards/advice-and-guidance/code-of-professional-conduct-for-veterinary-surgeons/

"As a member of the veterinary medical profession, I solemnly swear that I will use my scientific knowledge and skills for the benefit of society.

I will strive to:

- > promote animal health and welfare.
- > prevent and relieve animal suffering.
- > protect the health of the public and the environment, and
- > advance comparative medical knowledge.

I will perform my professional duties conscientiously, with dignity, and in keeping with the principles of veterinary medical ethics.

I will strive continuously to improve my professional knowledge and competence and to maintain the highest professional and ethical standards for myself and the profession."

www.canadianveterinarians.net/about-cvma/the-canadian-veterinary-oath/

37

"Limiting warming to around 1.5°C (2.7°F) requires global greenhouse gas emissions to peak before 2025 at the latest, and be reduced by 43% by 2030"

IPCC_AR6_WGIII

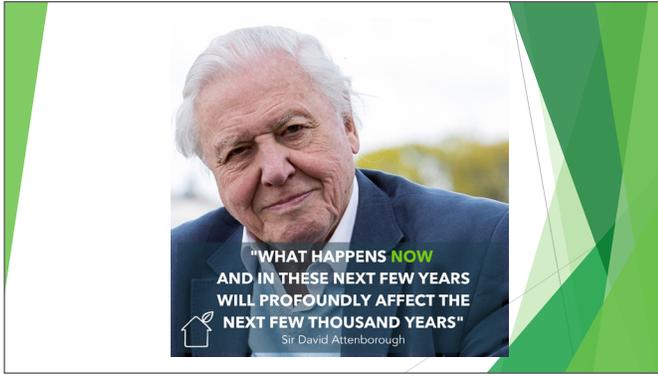
"We are at a crossroads. The decisions we make now can secure a liveable future. We have the tools and know-how required to limit warming."

IPCC Chair Hoesung Lee.

"It's now or never, if we want to limit global warming to 1.5°C (2.7°F). Without immediate and deep emissions reductions across all sectors, it will be impossible."

IPCC Working Group III Co-Chair Jim Skea

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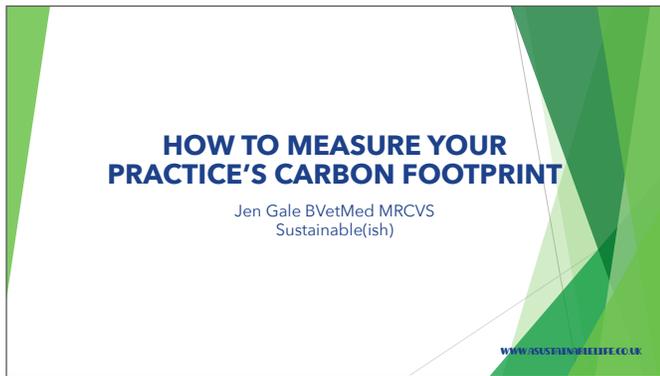
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3002

HOW TO MEASURE YOUR CLINIC'S CARBON FOOTPRINT (AND WHY YOU MIGHT WANT TO DO IT)

CARBON LITERACY & SUSTAINABILITY

 Jen Gale, BVetMed | Carbon Literacy Trainer and Founder of Sustainable(ish)

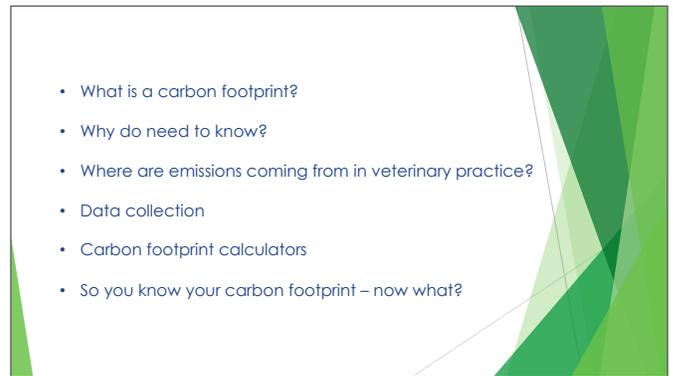


HOW TO MEASURE YOUR PRACTICE'S CARBON FOOTPRINT

Jen Gale BVetMed MRCVS
Sustainable(ish)

WWW.SUSTAINABLE(ISH).CO.UK

1



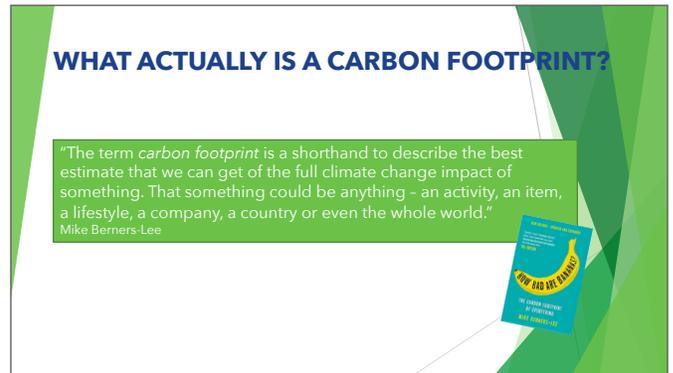
- What is a carbon footprint?
- Why do we need to know?
- Where are emissions coming from in veterinary practice?
- Data collection
- Carbon footprint calculators
- So you know your carbon footprint – now what?

2



- Small animal vet
- Founder of Sustainable(ish)
- Sustainability coach, author, podcaster and speaker
- Carbon Literacy Trainer
- Vet Sustain Director and member of Vet Sustain's Greener Veterinary Practice Working Group

3



WHAT ACTUALLY IS A CARBON FOOTPRINT?

"The term *carbon footprint* is a shorthand to describe the best estimate that we can get of the full climate change impact of something. That something could be anything – an activity, an item, a lifestyle, a company, a country or even the whole world."

Mike Berners-Lee

4



SCOPES 1, 2 AND 3

- SCOPE 1**: Direct emissions from operations
- SCOPE 2**: Indirect emissions from purchased energy
- SCOPE 3**: All other emissions associated with a company's activities

5



15 CATEGORIES OF SCOPES 3

Upstream Scope 3 Emissions	Downstream Scope 3 Emissions
1. Purchased goods and services	9. Downstream transportation & distribution
2. Capital goods	10. Processing of sold products
3. Fuel- and energy-related activities (not included in scope 1 or scope 2)	11. Use of sold products
4. Upstream transportation & distribution	12. End-of-life treatment of sold products
5. Waste generated in operations	13. Downstream leased assets
6. Business travel	14. Franchises
7. Employee commuting	15. Investments
8. Upstream leased assets	

6



7



8

NET ZERO

Reducing Greenhouse Gas emissions to as close to zero as possible
SBTi - 90% reduction by 2050

Net zero is a state where we add no incremental greenhouse gases to the atmosphere.

CARBON NEUTRAL

The process of offsetting emissions to neutral. Achieved through purchasing carbon credits from offsetting projects.

Carbon neutrality does not remove carbon, but can be a key step towards Net Zero

9

WHY DO WE NEED TO KNOW?

- 'We can't manage what we can't measure'
- Setting targets for reductions
- Legislation
- Pressure/demand from clients and supply chain
- Transparency
- Benchmarking

10

SO HOW DO WE DO IT?

11

STEP 1 - WHOSE JOB IS THIS?

- Who is going to be responsible for measuring the practice's footprint?
- Block out time for it to happen
- What support do they need?

12

MAKE COPIOUS NOTES!

13

STEP 2 - DECIDE ON YOUR BOUNDARIES

- What scopes are you going to measure?
- Decide on a baseline year
- Are you including all of your veterinary practices/branch surgeries or just the main one to start with?
- Record number of members of staff (FTE), number of vets

14



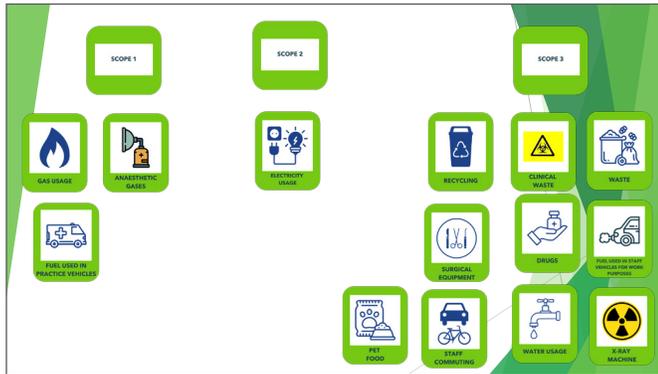
KEEP IT SIMPLE TO START WITH!

15

STEP 3 - COLLECT THE DATA

- Who has the bills?!
- What information do you need?

16



17

SCOPE 1

- Gas bills (heating and cooling)
- Oil
- Biofuels or biomass
- Fuel bills for practice owned vehicles (NB, Vehicle details)
- Refrigerant gases (eg from air con usage)
- Anaesthetic gas usage

18

SCOPE 2

- Electricity bills

19

SCOPE 3

- Water and sewerage bills
- 'Grey fleet' (NB, Vehicle details)
- Waste
 - domestic/general
 - veterinary care waste: offensive, clinical, pharmaceutical, sharps, etc
- Staff commuting
- Procurement

20

STEP 4 - CALCULATE YOUR FOOTPRINT

- Emissions factors
- Carbon footprint calculators

21

The screenshot shows the Government of Canada website with the following content:

- Government of Canada / Gouvernement du Canada
- Search ECCC
- MENU
- Canada.ca > Environment and natural resources > Climate change > Climate change: our plan > Carbon pollution pricing
- Carbon pollution pricing systems across Canada > Output-Based Pricing System > Canada's Greenhouse Gas Offset Credit System
- Emission Factors and Reference Values**
- Emission Factors and Reference Values (PDF version)
- www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/climate-change/pricing-pollution-how-it-will-work/output-based-pricing-system/federal-greenhouse-gas-offset-system/emission-factors-reference-values.html

22

Natural Resources Canada

Greenhouse Gas Equivalencies Calculator

Did you ever wonder what reducing carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions by 1 million metric tons means in everyday terms? The greenhouse gas (GHG) equivalencies calculator can help you understand just that, translating abstract measurements and emissions data into concrete terms, such as the annual emissions from cars or households.

There are two options for entering reduction data into this calculator:

- If You Have Energy Data**
- If You Have Emissions Data**

Please note that these estimates are approximate and should not be used for emission inventory or formal carbon footprinting exercises. Read more about the caveats and explanations on the [Calculations and References](#) page.

www.cee.nrcan.gc.ca/corporate/statistics/nevd/dpa/calculator/ghg-calculator.cfm

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THE VETERINARY CARBON CALCULATOR

Windsor Vet Practice
2021

Category	Percentage
Electricity	28%
Gas Fuels	14%
Medical Waste	12%
Travel	10%
Water	8%
Public Travel	6%
General Waste	4%
Medical Waste	2%
Other	2%

www.vetsustain.org/shop/carbon-calculator

24

TOP TIPS

JUST THE RAW DATA CAN STILL BE REALLY USEFUL!

25

STEP 5 - SET EMISSIONS REDUCTIONS TARGETS AND CREATE A PLAN!

- Net zero?
- 2030 goal?
- 3/5 year goals

26

"Limiting warming to around 1.5°C (2.7°F) requires global greenhouse gas emissions to peak before 2025 at the latest, and be reduced by 43% by 2030"

IPCC_AR6_WGIII

27

TOP TIPS

IDENTIFY HOT SPOTS AND QUICK WINS

28

2019

222.51t CO₂e
- 219.64t from nitrous oxide
(22 size E cannisters)

Category	Percentage
Electricity	28%
Gas Fuels	14%
Liquid Fuels	12%
Biomass	10%
Biofuels	8%
Water	6%
Travel	4%
Public Travel	2%
General Waste	2%
Medical Waste	2%
Anaesthetics	2%

29

2020

44.52t CO₂e
- 39.94t from nitrous oxide
(4 size E cannisters)

Category	Percentage
Electricity	28%
Gas Fuels	14%
Liquid Fuels	12%
Biomass	10%
Biofuels	8%
Water	6%
Travel	4%
Public Travel	2%
General Waste	2%
Medical Waste	2%
Anaesthetics	2%

30



**GET OTHER PEOPLE
ON BOARD!**

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QUESTIONS?

jen@sustainableish.co.uk

WWW.SUSTAINABLEISH.CO.UK

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3003

THE SUSTAINABLE VETERINARY PRACTICE OF THE FUTURE

CARBON LITERACY & SUSTAINABILITY

 Jen Gale, BVetMed | Carbon Literacy Trainer and Founder of Sustainable(ish)

THE SUSTAINABLE VETERINARY PRACTICE OF THE FUTURE

Jen Gale BVetMed MRCVS
Sustainable(ish)

[WWW.SUSTAINABLE\(ISH\).CO.UK](http://WWW.SUSTAINABLE(ISH).CO.UK)

1

- What do we need to do?
- The power of imagination and storytelling
- Postcards from the future
- Veterinary practice in 2030

2



- Small animal vet
- Founder of Sustainable(ish)
- Sustainability coach, author, podcaster and speaker
- Carbon Literacy Trainer
- Vet Sustain Director and member of Vet Sustain's Greener Veterinary Practice Working Group



3

THE SCIENCE SAYS...

4

NET ZERO

Reducing Greenhouse Gas emissions to as close to zero as possible
SBTi - 90% reduction by 2050

Net zero is a state where we add no incremental greenhouse gases to the atmosphere.

5



"Limiting warming to around 1.5°C (2.7°F) requires global greenhouse gas emissions to peak before 2025 at the latest, and be reduced by 43% by 2030"
IPCC_AR6_WGIII

"We are at a crossroads. The decisions we make now can secure a liveable future. We have the tools and know-how required to limit warming."
IPCC Chair Hoesung Lee.

"It's now or never, if we want to limit global warming to 1.5°C (2.7°F). Without immediate and deep emissions reductions across all sectors, it will be impossible."
IPCC Working Group III Co-Chair Jim Skea

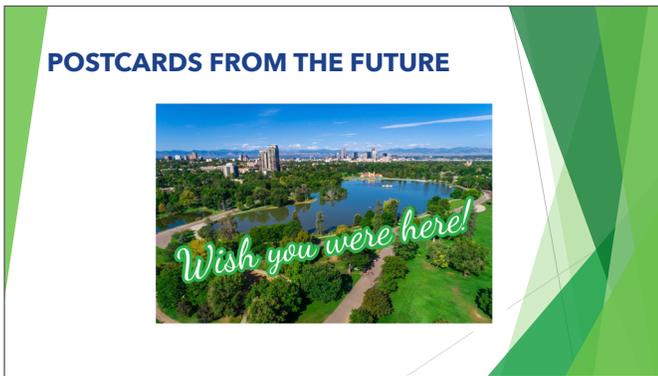
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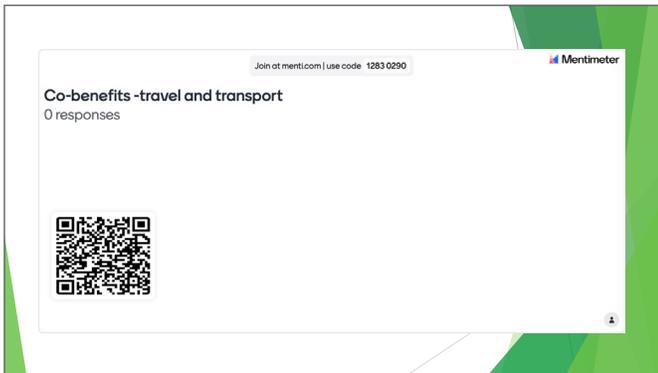
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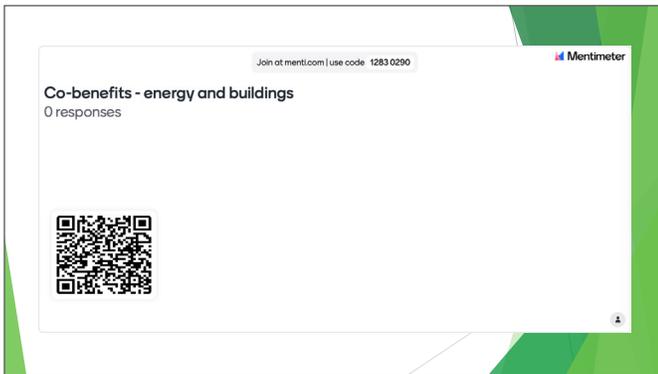
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14

VETERINARY PRACTICE

Greetings from 2030!

I'm just about to leave after another busy day at the clinic and can't help reflecting on the changes that we've made and how far we've come in such a relatively short space of time.

I'm so delighted to now be able to cycle safely to work, alongside so many of my colleagues - the fresh air and exercise that now bookend my days has made such a difference to my mental health, and the e-bike means that I don't arrive hot and sweaty! I'm also surprised at how many clients now arrive at the clinic either via the new bus routes, or on foot if they're coming in for routine health checks and health boosters, and they all love the free planting reward scheme we've introduced for car-free travel. However, we're seeing fewer clients in clinic thanks to improvements in telemedicine, and increased confidence in it from both staff and clients - this not only means reduced transport emissions, it means patients are less stressed, and clients are happy as it's quicker and easier for them.

We have completed the reviews of all of our standard protocols now, and patient care is better than it's ever been. We started off looking at our anaesthetic practices, and after some great in-house CPD the whole team are very confident with low-flow anaesthesia and often reflect on how much easier it is to manage. We are also anaesthetising fewer patients after reviewing our criteria for sedation vs full GA and our practice manager is very happy at the resultant savings on purchasing anaesthetic gases and oxygen!

And speaking of operating, simple switches like using Sterillum instead of traditional scrubbing up techniques have slashed our water usage, and the waste savings of using reusable drapes, gowns and scrub hats (everyone loves choosing the fabric the fabric patterns they want for their own scrub hats!) has been staggering.

15

VETERINARY PRACTICE

Greetings from 2030!

Another big change has been the transition to Green Health Care Plans for all of our patients. Gone are the days of blanket prescribing prophylactic anti-parasitics and owners really appreciate the tailored approach we are able to offer their pets, saving them money and alleviating the environmental burden associated with these products that we were all learning about a few years ago. The nurses have loved incorporating 'how to be a sustainable pet owner' into their puppy and kitten clinics, and find that for many of our clients, knowing that their pet's weight loss journey is also having a positive environmental impact is an added incentive.

And speaking of diets, following reviews of the optimal diets for our pets from both a health and an environmental perspective, we're all big fans of the latest novel protein foods, and now stock a range of 'pet and planet-friendly' diets.

Our retro-fitting projects are just about finishing, and I'm amazed at the difference they have made. The clinic is now the equivalent of 'PassivHaus' standards, meaning that it takes very little energy to keep it warm in the winter and cool in the summer. Everyone is so much more comfortable, patients and staff alike. And I love the fact that the energy we do use comes from the roof-top solar that we had installed a few years ago and that has already paid for itself!

The recruitment and retention issues we were struggling with as a profession post Covid seem to be resolving - we've done a great job of positioning veterinary medicine as a career option for young people wanting to make a positive difference to the world, cementing our unique positions as advocates for One Health.

16

Join at mentimeter | use code 1283 0290

Co-benefits - veterinary practice

0 responses

17

YOUR 2030

Greetings from 2030!

18

Join at mentimeter | use code 1283 0290

Your 2030

0 responses

19

CREATE A COLLECTIVE 2030 VISION

20

QUESTIONS?

jen@sustainableish.co.uk

WWW.SUSTAINABLEISH.CO.UK

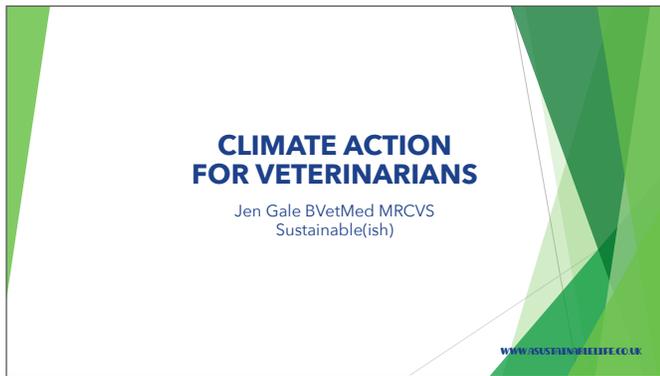
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3004

CLIMATE ACTION FOR VETERINARIANS

CARBON LITERACY & SUSTAINABILITY

 Jen Gale, BVetMed | Carbon Literacy Trainer and Founder of Sustainable(ish)



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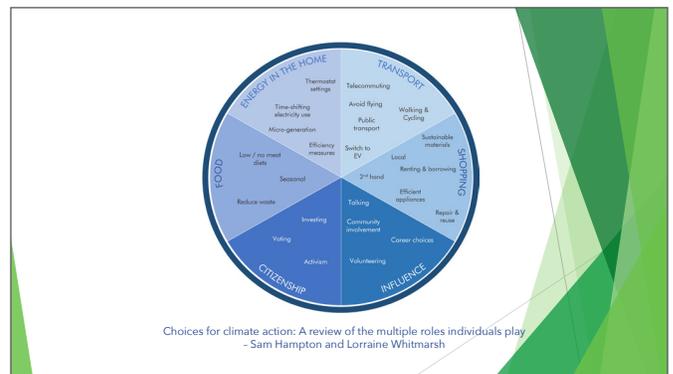
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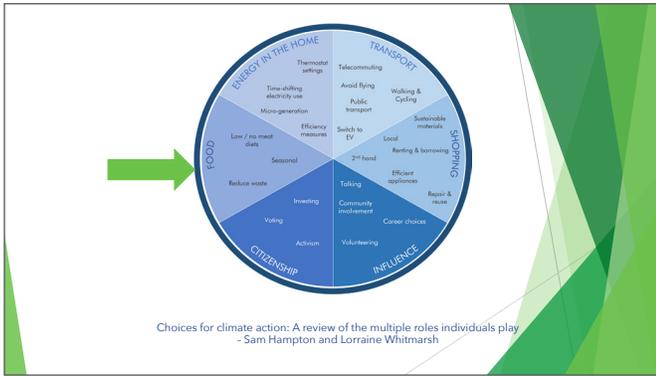
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FOOD

- Our own diets – food choices, seasonal, food waste

8



9

FOOD

- Our own diets – food choices, seasonal, food waste
- Food choices in the practice for staff eg in the staff room - composting bin for food waste

10

FOOD

- Our own diets – food choices, seasonal, food waste
- Food choices in the practice for staff eg in the staff room
- Pet food

11

Pet	Normal diet (kg CO ₂ e)	No red meat (kg CO ₂ e)	Insect based (kg CO ₂ e)
Cat	233	174	24
Small dog (<10kg)	295	220	30
Medium dog (10-30kg)	795	566	76
Large dog (>30kg)	1388	1035	139

12

FOOD

- Our own diets – food choices, seasonal, food waste
- Food choices in the practice for staff eg in the staff room
- Pet food
- Our role as a profession in supporting the transition to lower impact food production

13

BVA POLICY POSITION

Our position recommends that the **veterinary profession promotes the "Less and Better" concept**, which sees some people reducing their overall consumption of animal-derived products, while maintaining their proportional spend on these products within their household food budget. This can be a mechanism for financially supporting high animal health and welfare standards, as part of ensuring the expanding global human population is fed sustainably and within planetary boundaries.

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15

THE CARBON FOOTPRINT OF ANIMALS UNDER OUR CARE

SPECIES	AVERAGE TOTAL CARBON FOOTPRINT OF ALL THE ANIMALS UNDER THE CARE OF EACH VET PER YEAR
EQUINE	524 tonnes CO ₂ e per vet per year
DOGS AND CATS	1,000 tonnes CO ₂ e per vet per year
SHEEP	7,800 tonnes CO ₂ e per vet per year
DAIRY CATTLE	24,000 tonnes CO ₂ e per vet per year
PIGS	27,000 tonnes CO ₂ e per vet per year
BEEF CATTLE	30,000 tonnes CO ₂ e per vet per year
FARMED FISH	36,000 tonnes CO ₂ e per vet per year
POULTRY	99,000 tonnes CO ₂ e per vet per year

Andrew Prentis
www.veterinary-practice.com/article/the-carbon-footprint-of-the-animals-under-our-care

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Choices for climate action: A review of the multiple roles individuals play
- Sam Hampton and Lorraine Whitmarsh

17

ENERGY (AND BUILDINGS)

18

Case Study: The Minster Veterinary Practice

Minster Vets Carbon Footprint 2019

Category	Percentage
Electricity	42%
Gas	38%
Other	20%

- We performed a lighting audit and replaced 70% of lightbulbs with LEDs and motion sensors
- Using 'switch off stickers' and encouraging people to switch off lights and equipment after use (people say that behaviour change can reduce electricity use by as much as 8%); we are definitely guilty of leaving the CT scanner/ultrasound machines etc on for longer than it is needed!
- Using an urn rather than kettle
- Switching to a renewable energy tariff through VetPartners
- Installing RadfleeK radiator covers to reduce heat loss
- Adjusting the heating and air con settings to a more efficient temperature
- Switching off the radiators in rooms not in use

19

New passive vet centre opens in Wigan

Veterinarian and passive house enthusiast Chris Copeman, whose £50,000 passive house retrofit was featured in Passive House Plus issue 29, has built a new veterinary practice in Wigan that is aiming to meet the passive house standard.

www.brynvets.co.uk

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TRAVEL AND TRANSPORT

- Staff commuting
- Travel to see clients
- Practice vehicles
- Client travel to the practice
- Drug deliveries
- CPD

Image: Energy Saving Trust

22

Case Study: Milton Keynes Vets4Pets



We looked at how to reduce travel to the practice for our colleagues and clients. Changes made include:

- Changing rota's so colleagues could car share
- Stopping split shifts to avoid double travel to work
- Changing our work van for an electric car
- Utilising the Group cycle to work scheme to help encourage people to cycle to work
- Sending products out by post so there are fewer client trips
- Checking wounds and small ailments via virtual consults or digital means
- Reducing the number of trips made by placing bigger orders less often for consumables

Photo credit: Alison Sweeting

23

A major consideration in our sustainability is our ambulatory vet service. Within the practice we use "Webfleet" a tool to track and monitor our vehicles and how they are being driven - reviewing any harsh braking, steering and excessive speed.

Within the practice we publish a league table of our most economical drivers in our newsletters to encourage all to drive more efficiently and thereby use less fuel. It encourages a focus for all to consider the way we drive, both at work and in our personal time, and demonstrates how they can have an effect on the economy of the vehicles we all drive.

As battery technology improves and our existing vehicles reach the end of their lifetime, we will look to replace with electric alternatives. We need a real life range of around 250 miles to make this a viable proposition for our busy ambulatory vets.

www.georgevetgroup.co.uk/sustainability-at-the-george/

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Mayne Veterinary Clinic

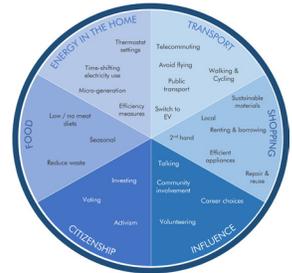
January 31 at 6:21 PM

Don't forget that pedal power!

We still provide the option of E-cargo deliveries for you pet's medication and food. This is a great service and a small local business, it saves fuel, carbon emissions and your time!



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"SHOPPING" (AKA PROCUREMENT) AND WASTE

Consumables NB, theatre waste
'Merchandise'/waiting room sales
Appliances/tech
Waste segregation and recycling



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CIRCULAR ECONOMY...

- Recyclable drip bags/bottles
- Loan scheme for buster collars and post-op t-shirts
- Re-usable aprons
- Re-usable drapes, gowns, masks, surgical hats
- Tins vs pouches
- Terracycle scheme collection point for pouches and blister packs
- Refurbished IT and equipment
- Recycling needle caps!
- Reducing clinical waste by clear segregation
- Fairphones for practice mobiles
- Composting paper towels and hair clippings
- Reducing printer and paper usage
-



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MAKE RECYCLING EASY!

Helen Gould – Old Hall Vets:

- Colour coded bins in EVERY room in the same order
- Clear, colour-coded posters on walls
- Start with just 3 bins plus clinical waste and sharps
- Place prominently so clients can observe staff proudly separating waste
- Make the recycling bins easier to get to than the clinical waste bins!



29

ANAESTHETIC GASES AND DRUGS

Gas	GWPe	Atmospheric Lifetime (years)
Isoflurane	510	32
Sevoflurane	130	1.1
Nitrous Oxide	265	110
Carbon Dioxide	1	74

It's time to say 'No' to N2O

We go for... LOWER FLOW

1. Avoid prolonged or unnecessary anaesthetics
 - Choose anaesthetic planes to ensure a patient is awake and breathing quickly after an anaesthetic
2. Manage your anaesthetics to conserve Fresh Gas Flow (FGF)
 - Adjust FGF to match your patient's metabolic and respiratory needs
 - Use low flow systems and low flow breathing systems
 - Use low flow systems in patients with low metabolic rates
 - Use low flow systems in patients with low respiratory rates
 - Use low flow systems in patients with low tidal volumes
 - Use low flow systems in patients with low oxygen consumption
3. Use circle breathing systems in animals over 5-10kg
 - Circle breathing systems are designed to conserve anaesthetic gas and reduce fresh gas flow requirements
 - Circle breathing systems are also designed to reduce anaesthetic gas consumption and reduce anaesthetic gas waste
 - Circle breathing systems are also designed to reduce anaesthetic gas consumption and reduce anaesthetic gas waste
4. Use low flow systems in animals under 5-10kg
 - Low flow systems are designed to conserve anaesthetic gas and reduce fresh gas flow requirements
 - Low flow systems are also designed to reduce anaesthetic gas consumption and reduce anaesthetic gas waste
 - Low flow systems are also designed to reduce anaesthetic gas consumption and reduce anaesthetic gas waste

LINNAEUS

30



We recognise that environmental protection is not just about carbon emissions, so have taken steps to reduce the use of potentially harmful drugs such as anti-parasitics and antibiotics, through colleague and client education. We have performed an audit of antibiotic use and were delighted to find that our use of Highest Priority – Critically Important Antibiotics (HP-CIAs) has declined to zero. Sometimes it is as simple as not stocking a particular drug – it's amazing how you learn to cope without it!

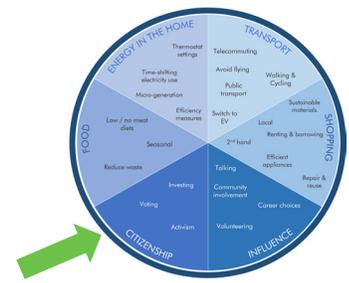
CASE STUDY
Case Study: Westover Vets

Our policies
Responsible use of parasiticides for cats and dogs



Why are dung beetles so good?!
It's great to see stock out again at the start of what we hope will be a fantastic grazing & growing season. It is often easy to forget what other life is also working hard for us in our fields, such as the humble dung beetle (beetle & earthworm among others!) Both have unearthed some facts...

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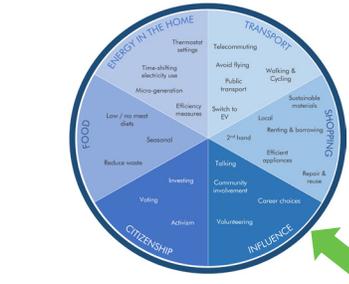
Choices for climate action: A review of the multiple roles individuals play
- Sam Hampton and Lorraine Whitmarsh

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www.bank.green

33



Choices for climate action: A review of the multiple roles individuals play
- Sam Hampton and Lorraine Whitmarsh

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**INFLUENCE
(AKA GETTING EVERYONE ON BOARD)**

- Senior leadership
- Colleagues
- Clients
- Supply chain
- Wider community

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**Becoming Sustainable Vets:
30 Days Greener**

By Laura Birnie, BVMS, BSc, MRCVS, Paragon Veterinary Group, Cumbea

Our aim is to make Paragon carbon neutral by 2030, or hopefully sooner.

We've already done a lot of work towards this goal across our Farm, Advanced Breeding, Small Animal and Equine divisions.

Last month November 2021, we decided to carry out, commit to or begin a new different change each day in a drive called 30 Days Greener which we ran on our social media.

I didn't want this to become a list of things we've already done but wanted to see if we could come up with even more ideas, no matter how small.

Our staff were great and emailed me loads of great ideas. As you can imagine it's not that easy to change one thing a day for a whole month. But we managed it and it's something we are proud of.

Someone once told me that sustainability isn't about a few people doing something big, it's about a lot of people doing what they can to make a difference.

www.paragonvet.com/assets/PDF-files/30-days-greener.pdf



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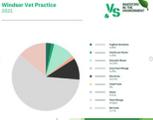
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PRIORITISE...!

38

- Recruit a team
- Measure your baseline practice carbon footprint
- Set a Net Zero Goal and an interim 2030 goal
- Identify your big emissions areas, and some quick wins
- Create a practice environmental policy
- Owner/client education
 - info of to reduce your pet's 'pawprint' in new puppy/kitten packs
 - client information evenings
 - blog posts
 - waiting room displays
- Progress over perfection!



39

GREENER VETERINARY PRACTICE CHECKLIST

www.vetsustain.org/resources/vet-practice-checklist



vetsustain.org/resources/vet-practice-checklist
 #GreenerVetChecklist

40

QUESTIONS?

jen@sustainableish.co.uk

WWW.SUSTAINABLEISH.CO.UK

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4001

MENTAL HEALTH: BUILDING RESILIENCE AND MANAGING COMPASSION FATIGUE IN VETERINARY MEDICINE

WELL-BEING & LEADERSHIP

 Saajan Bhakta, PhD (Psychology) | Former Director of Employee Experience at VetCor



Mental Health: Building Resilience and Managing Compassion Fatigue in Veterinary Medicine

Saajan Bhakta, PhD

1



Roadmap

Topics

- Compassion Fatigue
- Vicarious Trauma
- Burnout
- Stress and Anxiety
- Moral Stress

Actionable Practices

- PERMA Model for Building Resilience
- Mindfulness
- Professional Quality of Life Scale

2

Resources

Suicide Hotline: 988

Warmline (for those who aren't in crisis, but want to talk to someone): www.warmline.org

Text HOME to 741741 to connect with a Crisis Counselor

Free 24/7 support at your fingertips

ConnexOntario Helpline

Free and confidential health services information for people experiencing problems with alcohol and drugs, mental illness or gambling.

Toll-free: 1-866-531-2600



3

Question Cards

4

Pieces of the Puzzle

"The expectation that we can be immersed in suffering and loss daily and not be touched by it is as unrealistic as expecting to be able to walk through water without getting wet."

Dr. Rachel Remen

```

    graph LR
      PQOL[Professional Quality of Life] --> CF[Compassion Fatigue]
      PQOL --> CS[Compassion Satisfaction]
      CF --> B[Burnout]
      CF --> ST[Secondary Trauma]
  
```

5

Compassion Fatigue, VT, and Burnout

Compassion Fatigue: "The profound emotional and physical erosion that takes place when helpers are unable to refuel and regenerate" (Figley, 2013).

Vicarious trauma: "The profound shift in world view that occurs in helping professionals when they work with clients who have experienced trauma. Helpers notice that their fundamental beliefs about the world are altered and possibly damaged by being repeatedly exposed to traumatic material" (Pearlman & Saakvitne, 1995).

Burnout: "The physical and emotional exhaustion that workers can experience when they have low job satisfaction and feel powerless and overwhelmed at work. However, burnout does not necessarily mean that our view of the world has been damaged, or that we have lost the ability to feel compassion for others" (Figley, 1995).

6

Compassion Fatigue, VT, and Burnout

Compassion Fatigue: Losing the ability to feel empathy due to constant exposure to others' suffering.

Vicarious trauma: Being emotionally affected by hearing about or witnessing someone else's trauma.

Burnout: Feeling totally drained from stress and work overload.

7

Burnout & Compassion Fatigue

Compassion fatigue specifically arises from the **empathetic strain of caring for others**, whereas burnout can stem from a variety of stressors, including workload, organizational issues, or personal factors.

Burnout can turn into compassion fatigue when the stress and emotional strain of caring for others become overwhelming, leading to a depletion of empathy and emotional resilience.

8

The Difference?

Burnout is about feeling exhausted from too much work, and compassion fatigue is about feeling overwhelmed by caring too much about others.

Burnout vs. Compassion Fatigue

Burnout is when a superhero gets really tired and overwhelmed from doing too much. They feel like they can't keep going, and they start to feel distant from their work and the people they help.

Compassion fatigue is like when the superhero cares so much about others that it makes them feel really sad and tired. They might even start having bad dreams and feeling anxious because they're taking on too much of other people's problems.

9

Contributions to Burnout

- High Stress: Long hours, fatigue, and intense workloads.
- Lack of Meaning: Reduced support, excessive responsibility without control.
- Challenging Culture: Poor peer support, unprofessionalism, disengaged leadership.
- Work-Life Imbalance

10

Contributions to Compassion Fatigue

Internal factors that contribute to compassion fatigue:

- Ability to experience emotion
- Personality types
 - Research has shown DVM students tend to lack assertiveness (ability to say no), are perfectionists, and have a high sensitivity to suffering (placing the needs of others before their own).

External factors that contribute to compassion fatigue:

- Time constraints
- Exposure to death and grief
- Unresolved trauma
- Work-related stress

(Ayl, 2013)



11

Stress vs Anxiety

Stress: "People experience mental **and** physical symptoms, such as irritability, anger, fatigue, muscle pain, digestive troubles, and difficulty sleeping" (APA, 2021).

Stress is generally a response to an external cause (angry client, negative online review, disagreement on a clinical case), which usually dissipates once the situation or stressor has been resolved.

Anxiety: "Persistent, excessive worries that don't go away even in the absence of a stressor" (APA, 2021)

Anxiety is typically characterized by a persistent feeling of apprehension or dread related to things which are generally non-threatening. Unlike stress, anxiety persists even after a concern has passed (toxic work environment, etc.)

(Ross, 2018)



12

Potential Stressors in a Veterinary Career



- Angry or upset clients
- Client insults/social media and online reviews
- Self-loathing after a case gone wrong
- Your boss and the focus on numbers/production
- The fear of a late-night surgery which causes you to miss your child's birthday party (again)



13

Moral Stress



Kahler (2014) argued that moral stress is the top trigger in veterinarians' compassion fatigue.

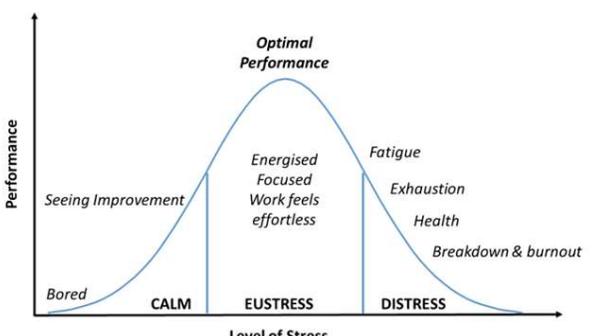
Handling ethical dilemmas, or the lack thereof, is the most common cause of poor wellness in veterinary medicine.

While there are several events which can impact a veterinary professional's wellness such as giving bad news, interacting with difficult clients, and work-life balance, **handling ethical dilemmas is the worst stressor.**

Research has shown that veterinarians face ethical dilemmas **three to five times per week** (Kahler, 2014).

14

Poor Stress Response → Burnout



The graph shows a bell-shaped curve of Performance vs. Level of Stress. The x-axis is divided into CALM, EUSTRESS, and DISTRESS. The y-axis is labeled Performance.

- CALM:** Bored, Seeing Improvement
- EUSTRESS:** Energised, Focused, Work feels effortless
- DISTRESS:** Fatigue, Exhaustion, Health Breakdown & burnout

Optimal Performance is at the peak of the curve.

Yerkes-Dodson Curve 1908



15

How to Help Peers

In veterinary medicine, we all care for one another, and we sometimes might need to help colleagues, peers, and friends in the industry through challenging times. As a veterinarian, technician, or clinic team member, you might also be supporting clients as their pets cross the rainbow bridge.



Pity: I acknowledge your suffering.	Sympathy: I care about your suffering.	Empathy: I feel your suffering.	Compassion: I want to relieve your suffering.
---	--	---	---

Engagement →

- Active/reflective listening
- QPR for crises
- Referrals

16

Active Listening



- Active listening is when you are literally in an active state of listening.
- Your goal is to be in a psychological mindset of just hearing what the other person is saying. This means that you are not interpreting by using your own lens, but you are hearing the other person as an OTHER.
- Active listening requires full attention in order to be able to really hear the words that the other person is saying. It also requires being in a cognitive and emotional space of curiosity.
- When listening with curiosity, it doesn't mean you agree with the other person, but you are genuinely interested in their perspective.

17

Symptoms of Compassion Fatigue



- Bottled-up emotions
- Sadness and apathy
- Inability to get pleasure from activities that previously were enjoyable
- Isolation
- Difficulty concentrating
- Feeling mentally and physically tired
- Chronic physical ailments
- Voicing excessive complaints about your job, your manager(s) and/or co-workers
- Lack of self-care, including poor hygiene and a drop-off in your appearance
- Recurring nightmares or flashbacks
- Substance abuse or other compulsive behaviors such as over-eating or gambling

(AVMA, 2021)

18

Addressing Compassion Fatigue



There is no policy or protocol.
There is no magic answer, so it is important to be proactive in your approach.
Prevention is KEY!
It starts with a proactive approach that puts balance at the forefront of your mind.
Determine your emotional triggers (a trigger is a painful emotional response).
Find a compassion fatigue specialist.

19

Addressing compassion fatigue!



Building resilience is key to preventing compassion fatigue!

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) cites four areas that are key to building resilience:

- Adequate sleep
- Good nutrition
- Regular physical activity
- Active relaxation such as yoga or meditation

Take time to **be alone with yourself**.

Engage in **meditation and/or mindfulness-based stress reduction**.

Engage with co-workers to celebrate successes and mourn sorrows as a group.



(AVMA, 2021)

20

Addressing compassion fatigue!



Building resilience is key to preventing compassion fatigue!

- **Connect with other colleagues**, either in person or through online discussions like Not One More Vet, for shared support that can help you feel supported and heard.
- Practice **expressive writing** - Journaling for about 15 minutes every day about what stressed you out that day, what went well that day, etc. (Freestyle)
- Practice your **spiritual or religious beliefs**.
- **Complete basic hygiene tasks** every day, such as combing/brushing your hair and changing into and out of work clothes (scrubs off before dinner!)
- **Wash up before you leave work** - Give it a try! Washing your hands and face before walking out of the door can help leave work at work. Think of it as a symbolic 'washing away' of the hardness of the day.



(AVMA, 2021)

21

The Five Cs Model



Control: Identify aspects of your work and life that you can control and take charge of them. Set boundaries and prioritize self-care.

Communication: Share your feelings and experiences with trusted colleagues, friends, or therapists.

Connection: Maintain meaningful relationships both inside and outside of work to combat isolation.

Coping: Develop and use effective coping strategies for managing stress.

Compassion: Cultivate self-compassion and self-care as integral parts of your daily routine.

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Self-Care

We must be careful that we don't fall into a yo-yo cycle with self-care.

Yo-yo cycle: You get away from work and you feel better, you come back to work, and you feel distressed. You might even be more bitter the day you return to work!

Make self-care a way of life, not just an event that you look forward to.

The 5-Minute Self-Care Plan: Dedicate at least five minutes each day to self-care activities such as deep breathing exercises, meditation, journaling, or a brief walk.

- Write down five things every day that didn't totally suck (this puts things into psychological perspective and reduces emphasis on stressors)
- Say no to the dinner plans!
- Literally stop and smell your coffee.
- Don't eat the kale salad (even if Instagram tells you to!)

(Pulito, 2017)

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Self-Care Pillars

Social:

- Identify supportive people, even if not close (Sometimes those who we love can drain us)
- Connect through various means: coffee, dinner, walks, FaceTime, text, group chats, etc.
- Recognize those who alleviate stress and those who add to it
- Choose healthy social outlets

Physical:

- Engage in physical activities: walks, gym, yoga, stairs, dancing, stretches
- Incorporate stress-relief techniques: massage pressure points, breathing exercises
- Prioritize attainable and realistic physical practices
- Emphasize diaphragmatic breathing for physical and mental health

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Self-Care Pillars

Spiritual:

- Acknowledge spirituality beyond religion
- Attend religious services or seek virtual support if religious
- Practice gratitude and mindfulness for connection with others and nature

Financial:

- Be aware of financial stress during splurges to prevent more stress
- Stay within financial means for sustainable self-care
- Avoid turning self-care into retail therapy
- Rule: Self-care now shouldn't cause stress later

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Self-Care Pillars

Mental/Creative:

- Engage in activities that help unwind
- Reading, journaling, music, art, cooking, hobbies, etc.
- Focus senses on tasks to divert from work or stress
- Use TV in moderation to avoid excessive mental strain

Additional Considerations:

- Create a personal list of self-care practices that work for YOU
- Explore apps like Virtual Hopebox (The app contains simple tools to help users with coping, relaxation, distraction and positive thinking using personalized audio, video, pictures, games, mindfulness exercises, activity planning, inspirational quotes and coping statements.
- Utilize company-provided resources like EAP, Aetna Resources, etc.

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Self Care Wheel Activity

Gratitude Wall Activity

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Creative Ideas

- **Mindful Coloring or Art Therapy:** Engage in coloring books, painting, or other forms of art therapy to relax and express your emotions creatively. Art can be a therapeutic way to release stress.
- **Nature Immersion:** Spend time in nature, whether it's a park, forest, or beach. Nature has a calming effect and can help you reconnect with your inner self.
- **Music and Sound Therapy:** Listen to soothing music, practice deep breathing while focusing on calming sounds like ocean waves or rain, or even try playing a musical instrument to relieve stress.
- **Immersive Virtual Reality:** Explore VR experiences designed for relaxation and stress relief. VR can transport you to calming virtual environments.

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Building Resilience and Wellbeing

The founding father of Positive Psychology, Martin Seligman (2018), developed the **PERMA Model**, which contains five factors to help individuals build resilience and wellbeing – **Positive emotions, Engagement, (positive) Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment**.

Positive Psychology:

- Moving from “fixing” what is “wrong” to leveraging, amplifying, and developing what is “right” (strengths; building from within).
- Using our own talents and innate skills as building blocks.
- Requires introspective reflection

35

POSITIVE EMOTION

When we feel positive emotions, we perform better and feel better. So, let’s amplify the positive emotions in our life (intentionally!) to help us build resilience.

1. Ask yourself what are the things that make you happy? (music, gardening, movies, exercise, etc.)
2. Make a plan for how you are going to incorporate more of what makes you happy by budgeting the necessary time throughout the week.
3. Gratitude diaries can also help train the brain to focus on the positive and put things into perspective.
4. Repeat!



(Seligman, 2018)

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E

ENGAGEMENT

Think about the activities you do when you feel like time is just standing still.

- So engrossed in the Game of Thrones episode that you didn’t hear your partner calling your name?
- So zoned out during your manicure that you just felt completely in the present?

In psychology, this is known as **“flow.” This is a state of being fully engaged with a task.** Seligman argued that engagement is one of the five crucial building blocks of wellbeing. Achieving flow comes different for everyone. Not everyone likes Yoga (it’s true!)

Figure out what in your life gives you a sense of engagement and flow and then amplify it.



(Seligman, 2018)

37

R

(POSITIVE) RELATIONSHIPS

Humans are wired to need a sense of belonging, a connection, and emotional and physical contact with others.

Relationships are a crucial part of our overall wellbeing.

Our wellbeing can be negatively impacted by destructive, draining, and one-sided relationships.

1. Make a list of the relationships in your life that make you feel supported, included, understood and cared for.
2. Amplify the amount of time you spend with those people! (Be intentional about it)
3. Repeat



(Seligman, 2018)

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M

MEANING

Seeing and working towards a meaning that is bigger and more important than just your own happiness is important. This is really aligned with a helping profession such as veterinary medicine. However, you should also find meaning outside of your career.

1. Make a list of all of the activities that bring you meaning in your life. Think about religious/faith work, a political agenda, community work, and volunteering.
2. Budget time in your schedule to spend time with like-minded people in these groups because working towards a common goal that you really believe in brings significance to your life outside of your career.
3. When the going gets tough at work, you are going to need to rely on other meaningful activities!



(Seligman, 2018)

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A

ACCOMPLISHMENT

The last building block that allows individuals to achieve optimal wellbeing is **accomplishment. This is sense of mastery over something (outside of being an amazing DVM).**

Perhaps you are always trying to beat the next level of Candy Crush or you are so involved in Sudokus? Maybe it is a jigsaw puzzle or beating your mile run time. Maybe you are always trying to get a higher bowling score or bake the perfect cake.

1. Make a list of things where you find yourself trying to “get to the next level” or “the next step.”
2. Set realistic goals to achieve that accomplishment.
3. Celebrate your success!
4. Repeat

Over time, you will find that the mere process of achieving tasks can help you build resilience.



(Seligman, 2018)

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PERMA Calendaring Activity

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STOP Technique

Make a commitment to begin pressing the STOP button when presented with a stressful situation.

S Stop and interrupt “automatic pilot” by concentrating on the present moment. Literally tell yourself “stop!”

T Take a deep breath (or a few) and bring your attention to your breath as a focus point.

O Observe Become the observer of your thoughts, emotions and physical reactions. What thoughts do you notice? What emotions are present? How does your body feel? Tune in and sit with whatever arises for a few moments. In what ways can you respond that would be positive and fruitful in the current interaction?

P Proceed and reconnect with your surroundings. Respond mindfully to the situation at hand.

42

Mindfulness

Mindfulness has been shown to decrease professional burnout and compassion fatigue and raise distress tolerance (Krasner et al., 2009).

Guided meditation

Research suggests that practicing a 5- to 10-minute guided meditation to transition from work to home, especially after very long or very stressful day, can be effective.

It allows veterinarians to leave work at work and be fully present in their home lives.

Look for guided meditation apps like Headspace, Calm, Insight Timer, or Smiling Mind, or search YouTube for “guided meditation.”

(Correia et al., 2017; Holzel et al., 2011; Noonan, 2014; Chiesa & Serretti, 2009)

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Mindfulness

Mindful gratitude

Practicing gratitude is an easy way to implement mindfulness into your veterinary hospital.

Use the TY4 method:

Thank you for (something specific) instead of a blanket ‘thank you’ is much more meaningful to people.

While this takes very little effort on your part, when you show appreciation, you feel good, too! That’s self-care at its finest. When you feel good, you’re less likely to burn out.

Yoga

Yoga is not for everyone, and that is totally okay. Give it a try a few times to see if the art of being present works for you!

(Correia et al., 2017; Holzel et al., 2011; Noonan, 2014; Chiesa & Serretti, 2009)

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Mindfulness Works



Mindfulness practice leads to increases in regional brain gray matter density (Hölzel et al., 2011)!

“Grey matter contains most of the brain’s neuronal cell bodies. The grey matter includes regions of the brain involved in muscle control, and sensory perception such as seeing and hearing, memory, emotions, speech, decision making, and self-control” (Kolb & Whishaw, 2003).

A large body of research has established the efficacy of mindfulness-based interventions in reducing symptoms of a number of disorders such as anxiety, depression, substance abuse, eating disorders, and chronic pain, as well as improving well-being and quality of life (Hölzel et al., 2011).

45

QPR for Preventing Suicide



QPR stands for Question, Persuade, and Refer — the 3 simple steps anyone can learn to help save a life from suicide.

Similar to how people trained in CPR and the Heimlich Maneuver can save lives, those trained in QPR can also save lives!

QPR training trains individuals on how to recognize the warning signs of a suicide crisis and how to question, persuade, and refer someone to help.

QPR is an emergency mental health intervention for suicidal persons created in 1995 by Paul Quinnett. The intent is also to identify and interrupt the crisis and direct that person to the proper care.

(Aldrich et al., 2018)



46

You are amazing!



A pet may be the only relationship in which someone feels loved, appreciated, and valued.

Pets make people happy! (Yes, here is a citation to prove it for the research enthusiasts!) (Bao & Schreer, 2016)

YOU are the hero for making that relationship possible!

Thank you for choosing a career and profession that brings so much joy into our world.

The recent pandemic has highlighted the importance of pets and the relationships they have with their pet parents, so thank you for your contribution to the world.

Never forget that the Care of the Caregiver and Health of Healer are two of the most important aspects of your career!

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Resources



Suicide Hotline: 988

Warmline (for those who aren't in crisis, but want to talk to someone): www.warmline.org

Text HOME to 741741 to connect with a Crisis Counselor

Free 24/7 support at your fingertips

Veterans Crisis Line (connect with a VA responder)
(800) 273-8255 and Press 1 or text 838255

211 provides callers with information about and referrals to social services for every day needs and in times of crisis

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Suggested Readings



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Letter Writing Activity

- Write a letter to yourself as you were 10 years ago. Reflect on the experiences, challenges, and lessons you've learned since then, both in your veterinary career and personal life. Share advice, wisdom, and encouragement with your past self, considering what you wish you had known or done differently.
- Write a letter to yourself as you envision being 10 years from now. Reflect on the aspirations, goals, and dreams you have for your veterinary career and personal life. Consider the experiences, challenges, and achievements you hope to have encountered by then. Share your hopes, fears, and aspirations with your future self, offering words of encouragement, wisdom, and support. Consider how reflecting on your present journey can guide and inspire you towards your envisioned future.

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4002

NAVIGATING CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN VETERINARY MEDICINE AND PRACTICE

WELL-BEING & LEADERSHIP

 Saajan Bhakta, PhD (Psychology) | Former Director of Employee Experience at VetCor



great ideas
CONFERENCE

Navigating Conflict Resolution in Veterinary Medicine and Practice
Saajan Bhakta, PhD

1



WORKPLACE CONFLICT
CPP Inc. 2008 Global Human Capital Report

85% at all levels experienced conflict at some point in their work experience.	29% experienced it almost constantly.
U.S. employees spend approximately 2.1 hours per week involved in conflict (as defined as "any workplace disagreement that disrupts the flow of work").	
27% witnessed it leading to personal attacks.	9% observed it causing a project to fail.

2



Causes of Conflict

- Past history/personality issues
- Different values and guiding principles
- Different perceptions or positions on the issue
- Lack of clarity

great ideas
CONFERENCE

3



WHAT PEOPLE SEE

← BEHAVIOR

↑ VALUES

↑ BELIEFS

↑ WORLDVIEW

WHAT IS HIDDEN

4



Conflict = Effective Teams

- Conflict is a natural and essential aspect of any healthy organization. It plays a crucial role in driving organizational success.
- The most productive teams are those that create an environment where members feel secure enough to express their disagreements openly.
- In a culture that embraces dissent and even encourages it, there is potential for fostering innovation, diversity of thought, and ultimately, improved decision-making processes.

5



HEALTHY CONFLICT

HEALTHY CONFLICT CAN:

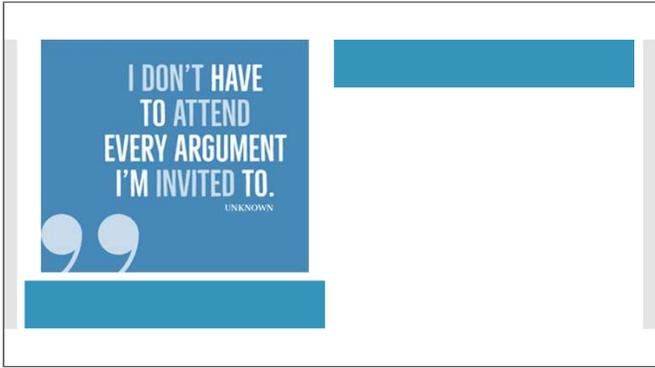
- 1) MAKE GROUPS CONSIDER A WIDE RANGE OF OPTIONS
- 2) BOOST CREATIVE THINKING
- 3) KEEP GROUPS ATTENTIVE TO ALL INTERESTS
- 4) HELP HEAR EVERYONE'S IDEAS
- 5) FOCUS ON THE FACTS AND STAY OBJECTIVE
- 6) USE A LOGICAL APPROACH TO CONSIDER SOLUTIONS

UNHEALTHY CONFLICT

UNHEALTHY CONFLICT CAN:

- 1) ENCOURAGE THOSE WHO THINK THEY ARE "RIGHT" TO FEEL SUPERIOR TO THOSE WHO ARE "WRONG"
- 2) BRING OUT PERSONAL ATTACKS AND BLAME
- 3) GENERATE DISTRUST
- 4) STIFLE COLLABORATION
- 5) MAKE PARTICIPANTS UPSET

6



7

Learning About Yourself Activity

- Understanding Your Approach to Conflict
- Identifying Your Preferred Conflict Resolution Strategies

8

The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Style Instrument

Competing – the goal is to win.

Avoiding – the goal is to delay (53% of people use this method)

Accommodating – the goal is to yield

Collaborating – the goal is mutual participation

Compromising – the goal is to find middle ground

Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Modes

Competing
 • Zero-sum orientation
 • Win/lose power struggle

Collaborating
 • Expand range of possible options
 • Achieve win/win outcomes

Compromising
 • Mutually acceptable to all
 • Relationships undamaged

Avoiding
 • Withdraw from the situation
 • Maintain neutrality

Accommodating
 • Accede to the other party
 • Maintain harmony

Focus on others' needs and mutual relationships. (Batista, 2007)

9

Competing

Competing can be effective:

- When there is a requirement for prompt and decisive action
- When unpopular action must be taken on important issues
- When the issue is vital, and the right course is clear
- To protect against people who take advantage of noncompetitive behavior

10

Accommodating

Accommodating can be effective:

- When you are wrong, learning is important, or demonstrating reasonableness is critical
- When creating goodwill is important
- When harmony is critical

11

Avoiding

Avoiding can be effective:

- When the matter holds little significance
- When you know you can't be satisfied
- When the costs of conflict outweigh the benefits of resolution
- To allow time to "cool off"
- When others can resolve the issue more effectively

12

Collaborating

Collaborating can be effective:

- When it's important that both sides be integrated
- When you want to learn and fully understand others' views
- To merge different perspectives and insights
- To work through hard feelings that have interfered with interpersonal relationships

13

Compromising

Compromising can be effective:

- When goals are less important than avoiding the disruption caused by more assertive conflict resolution styles
- When people have equal power and commitment to mutually exclusive goals
- To quickly reach a solution
- When it's important to reach a win-win for all involved

14

Key Takeaways

- Recognizing and understanding your influencing style allows you to enhance your negotiation skills and become a more effective negotiator.
- When you become aware of your "default approach," you gain the ability to select the most suitable approach for each unique situation. By adapting your style accordingly, you can navigate negotiations with greater finesse and achieve more successful outcomes.

15

Interest-Based Relational Model

- Make sure that good relationships are a priority.**
Respect others and strive to be courteous while engaging in constructive discussions.
- Separate people from problems.**
Recognize that the other person is not "being difficult" – real and valid differences can lie behind conflicting positions.
- Listen carefully to different interests.**
Aim to understand the perspectives of others to gain a better understanding of why they hold their positions.
- Listen first, talk second.**
Actively listening before defending your position allows you to remain open to the possibility of changing your mind based on new information.
- Set out the "facts."**
Decide on the observable facts that might impact your decision, together.
- Explore options together.**
Be open to the idea that a third position may exist, and that you might reach it jointly.

16

Skills for Resolution

- Be kind
- Empathize
- Paraphrase
- Ask questions
- "I" messages (I heard you say, I feel, I believe)
- Use neutral language
- Say "yes, and..." instead of "yes, but...."
- Practice difficult conversations ahead of time!

17

Skills for Resolution

- Avoid discussing attitudes and personalities
- Be cautious with criticism
- Find something on which to agree
- Avoid assumptions
- Listen actively
- Manage anger

18

LARA Method

Listen, Affirm, Respond, and Add allows for a straightforward and efficient approach to communicate with empathy and clarity.

- "Listen"** involves attentively focusing on the other person's words and emotions, refraining from any interruptions or judgments.
- "Affirm"** entails acknowledging their perspective and feelings without expressing agreement or disagreement.
- "Respond"** involves sharing your thoughts and emotions while avoiding blame or hostility.
- "Add"** suggests providing suggestions or solutions without enforcing or demanding compliance.

19

Neutral Language

- Instead of saying: "You never listen to my ideas!"
Neutral language: "I feel unheard when my ideas are not considered."
- Instead of saying: "This is all your fault!"
Neutral language: "There are some issues that we need to address together."
- Instead of saying: "You don't care about anyone but yourself!"
Neutral language: "I feel like our priorities may differ at times."
- Instead of saying: "You're being unreasonable!"
Neutral language: "I have a different perspective on this matter."
- Instead of saying: "You're a terrible team player!"
Neutral language: "I've noticed some challenges in our collaboration."

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Neutral Language

- Instead of saying: "I can't believe you did that."
Neutral language: "I'm trying to understand your actions."
- Instead of saying: "You always do this."
Neutral language: "I've noticed a pattern in our interactions."
- Instead of saying: "You're being unreasonable."
Neutral language: "Can we discuss our differing viewpoints?"
- Instead of saying: "That's a terrible idea."
Neutral language: "I have some concerns about that suggestion."
- Instead of saying "You're making this difficult."
Neutral language: "I'm finding it challenging to navigate this situation."

21

Open-Ended Questions

- What, Where, How, Who (be careful of why as "why" questions can start to feel like an interrogation)
- How do you see this situation from your perspective?
- What impact do you believe this conflict is having on our relationship/team?
- What do you think might be contributing to the tension between us?
- Can you explain your reasoning behind that decision/behavior?
- How would you like to see things change or improve in this situation?
- What ideas do you have for moving forward and finding a resolution?

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Active Listening

- Active listening is when you are literally in an active state of listening.
- Your goal is to be in a psychological mindset of just hearing what the other person is saying. This means that you are not interpreting by using your own lens, but you are hearing the other person as an OTHER.
- Active listening requires full attention in order to be able to really hear the words that the other person is saying. It also requires being in a cognitive and emotional space of curiosity.
- When listening with curiosity, it doesn't mean you agree with the other person, but you are genuinely interested in their perspective.
- "What I heard you say is..." and then repeat the message you heard from the other person. After repeating what they heard, it's important to ask, "Did I get that right?" This allows the other person to clarify, if needed, and also demonstrates that you aren't assuming anything.

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Mismatched Communication Styles

Example: Venters vs. Explainers

- Mismatched styles can feel more effortful: the amygdala may be triggered, causing a reflexive reaction based on our hardwired responses.
- Focus, be patient, and let them finish: During conversations, it's important to maintain focus, exercise patience, and allow the person to express themselves fully.
- Understand that the act of venting or explaining is something the person may feel compelled to do, so don't take it personally.
- After they are done, try asking:
 - "I can see that you had a lot to share. I want to make sure I understood correctly, so what is the most important thing we need to do in the short term, long term, and what should we prioritize ASAP?"
 - Then rephrase their response and ask, "Did I get that right, or is there anything important that I missed?"

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Quick Tips: Communication

Avoid using words like "business" or "operation." Instead, use words like "clinic team," "your partners," or "our group."

Avoid using the word "staff" or "employees." Instead, choose words like "team" or "partners."

Get to we: "What can we do right now?" is a great question to use. "How can we make this better? What are we going to do about it?" This is a technique called "forced teaming," where you make the two of you a "we," the other person may be less likely to direct their anxiety at you.

If you make a commitment to follow up by a certain time, provide an update (even if you haven't completed their request). That maintains trust in the communication process. Silence in NO! golden!



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Quick Tips: Communication

Undivided Attention: When people are paid attention to, they feel validated; they feel important. [reiterate questions in your reply, even in an email]

Thank you so much for sharing those details with me. It is my understanding that... and I am more than happy to help with your request!

Give Praise: Sometimes the issue isn't about a skill deficit but a confidence issue. A little encouragement can go a long way—whether it's with a few words of praise or a simple email high-five.

I know that XYZ can be confusing sometimes, but you are rocking it! I am impressed with how on top of this you are! Thanks for being such an awesome technician.

Focus on Feelings: That must be pretty scary, or even, "Tell me what that feels like." We create a sense of reliability.

Problem-Solve model vs Problem-Talk-Solve [each how to fish vs feed]

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Managing Anger

- Take a Time-Out: Step back from the discussion when anger escalates. Cool down and collect your thoughts before returning to the conversation.
- Practice Deep Breathing: Use slow, deep breaths to calm your nervous system and reduce anger.
- Identify Triggers: Be aware of what triggers your anger to better anticipate and manage it during conflicts.
- Practice Empathy: Try to understand the other person's feelings and concerns to create a more compassionate atmosphere.
- Seek Support: If managing anger alone is challenging, reach out to a trusted friend, mentor, or counselor for guidance.
- Practice Mindfulness: Stay present in the moment, manage emotions, and respond thoughtfully during conflicts.
- Set Boundaries: Establish respectful and constructive boundaries if the discussion becomes too heated.

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Empathize

THE FOCUS OF YOUR LISTENING IS TO UNDERSTAND THE OTHER PARTY — FOR YOU TO "GET IT."

WORK TO LET THEM KNOW WHAT IT IS YOU "GOT"

USE COMMUNICATION SKILLS SUCH AS — PARAPHRASING AND SUMMARIZING

USE THE SAME SORTS OF WORDS THEY ARE USING (NOT THE EXPLETIVES)

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

ACKNOWLEDGE WHAT HAS BEEN SAID



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Find	Find common ground: Look for areas of agreement or shared interests between the parties involved. Finding common ground can help build a foundation for a resolution.
Seek	Seek to understand: Try to understand the underlying needs, interests, and motivations of all parties involved. Focus on the issue, not the person: When resolving conflicts, direct your attention towards addressing the specific issue rather than resorting to personal attacks or assumptions.
Brainstorm	Brainstorm solutions together: Encourage open discussion and brainstorming of potential solutions. Involve all parties in the process of finding a resolution to increase buy-in and commitment.
Be	Be willing to compromise: In many cases, a complete victory for one party is not possible. Be open to finding middle ground and compromises that can satisfy everyone to some extent.
Document	Document agreements: When a resolution is reached, document the agreed-upon actions or solutions to ensure everyone is on the same page. This helps prevent misunderstandings later on.
Learn	Learn from the conflict: Use conflicts as learning opportunities to improve processes, communication, and relationships within the workplace.

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Peer Support

Internal Peer Mediation:

Consider choosing trusted hospital team members as mediators to facilitate conflict resolution in your hospital when needed. This approach is applied to non-sensitive issues, like matters related to unfairness. The effectiveness of this method relies on the careful selection of peer mediators, chosen for their exceptional communication skills and abilities.



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Preventing Conflict

Radical Candor by Kim Scott offers valuable insights into conflict management by emphasizing open communication, empathy, and direct feedback.

- Promotes Open Communication: Encourages direct and transparent communication among team members and leaders, fostering honest discussions and conflict resolution.
- Builds Trust and Psychological Safety: Through Radical Candor's caring yet challenging approach, it cultivates trust and psychological safety within teams, enabling open expression of concerns and opinions without fear of repercussions.
- Addresses Conflicts Proactively: Emphasizes timely conflict resolution, preventing minor issues from escalating into larger, harder-to-resolve problems.



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- Reduces Misunderstandings: Empathetic direct feedback minimizes misunderstandings that lead to conflicts. Open communication about perspectives and feelings helps find common ground and resolve differences.
- Facilitates Collaboration: Radical Candor fosters an environment where team members comfortably share ideas and concerns, promoting collaboration and joint problem-solving.
- Provides Clear Expectations: Honest feedback sets precise behavior and performance expectations, making it easier to address conflicts related to deviations.
- Focuses on the Problem, Not Personalities: Radical Candor emphasizes addressing issues objectively, not personally, enabling conflict resolution based on merit, not emotions.



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- Encourages Constructive Criticism: Radical Candor promotes valuable feedback for improving skills and performance, aiding growth amid conflicts.
- Nurtures a Learning Culture: With Radical Candor, conflicts become opportunities for learning and improvement, fostering continuous team growth.
- Maintains Relationships: By caring personally and challenging directly, Radical Candor preserves relationships during conflict resolution, preventing long-lasting resentments.

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Forgiveness

- Forgiveness is the act of understanding and **ending conflicts**, preventing them from lingering and worsening.
- Leaders should exemplify forgiveness, leading with humility and kindness. It acknowledges others, values relationships, and stops negative thought patterns from turning into harmful behaviors.
- As Gandhi said, "An eye for an eye will only make the whole world blind."
- Forgiveness breaks the cycle of resentment, allowing teams to move forward and focus on progress rather than dwelling on the past.

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Communication Wheel



Adapted from Alan Gibburg & Martha Spicer's ideas in 1997

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Questions

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4003

LEADING AND SUPPORTING AN INTERGENERATIONAL WORKFORCE WITHIN A VETERINARY PRACTICE

WELL-BEING & LEADERSHIP

 Saajan Bhakta, PhD (Psychology) | Former Director of Employee Experience at VetCor



Leading and Supporting an Intergenerational Workforce within a Veterinary Practice
Saajan Bhakta, PhD

1

Overview



Today, we will:

- Challenge stereotypes and preconceived notions
- Explore effective communication strategies
- Discuss how to develop leadership skills that transcend generational boundaries
- Dive into specific generational profiles
- Address conflicts and how to overcome challenges

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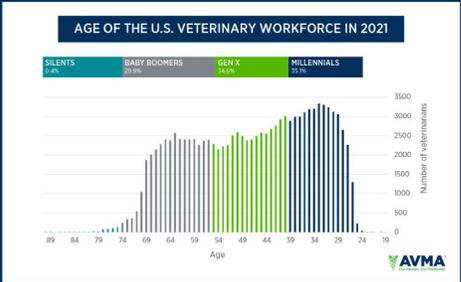


Notecard Story Activity

3

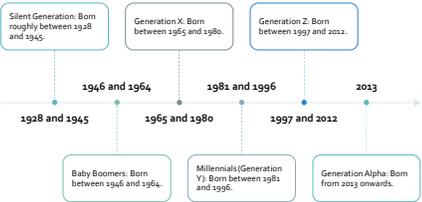
Importance & Context

Similar landscape in Canada per
Jelinski, M. D., Schreiner, B., Neale, A., & Townsend, H. G. G. (2022). Demographic survey of private veterinary practices in western Canada. The Canadian veterinary journal = La revue veterinaire canadienne, 63(1), 27–30.



4

The Generations



5

Generational Challenges as Life Stages

- When discussing generational differences, it's crucial to distinguish between true generational issues and life-stage factors.
- Society's changes can be mistaken for generational problems, blurring our understanding.
- People are in various life stages, shaping their needs and preferences. Embracing and respecting these distinctions fosters understanding instead of judgment.



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It's important to note that intergenerational challenges are generalizations, and not all individuals within a generation will exhibit these traits or face these difficulties.

Effective communication, understanding, and adapting to individual needs are essential for bridging generational gaps and creating a harmonious work environment.

Dangers of Generalization



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Initially, you may encounter difficulty in identifying commonalities between yourself and team members who are either older or younger.

Nevertheless, despite the apparent contrasts, research indicates that there are greater similarities than differences among generations.

Ultimately, most individuals desire engagement in their work, fair compensation, personal achievements, improved quality of life, happiness, and respect.

Research from the University of Minnesota demonstrated that generations were similar on 7 of the 10 work values that they studied, which demonstrates more similarities than differences.

There is value in educating ourselves on the realities different generations have faced throughout their careers.

Similarities

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Pulse

- What have been some of the challenges you have come across leading intergenerational teams in your hospitals?
- What are some things you have tried that have worked well?
- What are some things that you have tried that have not worked well?
- How has technology helped or hindered your practice team come together as a group?

9

Debunking Common Misconceptions and Stereotypes

Baby Boomers (1946-1964):

- Stereotype: Technologically challenged and resistant to change.
- Reality: Many Baby Boomers have embraced technology and adapted to the digital age. They have a wealth of experience and a strong work ethic.

Generation X (1965-1980):

- Stereotype: Disengaged and cynical.
- Reality: Generation X is known for their independent thinking and self-reliance. They are adaptable and value work-life balance.

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Debunking Common Misconceptions and Stereotypes

Millennials (1981-1996):

- Stereotype: Entitled and lazy.
- Reality: Millennials are a highly diverse generation, known for their tech-savviness, entrepreneurial spirit, and commitment to social causes.

Generation Z (1997-2012):

- Stereotype: Addicted to technology and lacking real-world skills.
- Reality: Generation Z is characterized by their digital fluency, creativity, and global awareness. They are adept at multitasking and possess strong problem-solving abilities.

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Strengths & Contributions of Each Generation

Baby Boomers:

- Experience: Baby Boomers have accumulated extensive knowledge and expertise in their respective fields.
- Work Ethic: They exhibit dedication, loyalty, and a strong sense of responsibility.
- Leadership: Many Baby Boomers possess valuable leadership skills and are effective mentors.



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Strengths & Contributions of Each Generation

Generation X:

- Adaptability: Generation X has demonstrated resilience in the face of rapid changes in the workplace.
- Pragmatism: They are known for their practical problem-solving abilities and ability to navigate complex situations.
- Work-Life Balance: Generation X values maintaining a healthy balance between work and personal life.



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Strengths & Contributions of Each Generation

Millennials:

- Technological Proficiency: Millennials are often at the forefront of digital advancements and bring innovative solutions to the table.
- Collaboration: They excel in working collaboratively and thrive in diverse team environments.
- Social Consciousness: Millennials actively engage in social causes and strive to create positive change.



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Strengths & Contributions of Each Generation

Generation Z:

- Creativity: Generation Z is highly creative and brings fresh perspectives and ideas to the table.
- Tech-Savviness: They have grown up in a digital world and possess advanced technological skills.
- Entrepreneurial Spirit: Generation Z demonstrates a strong drive for entrepreneurship and innovation.



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Common Beliefs: Gen Z

Generation Z, or Post-Millennials, grew up in a tech-driven world. They trust online information due to early device exposure and have high global awareness from online news and social media.

As Clients:

- Prefer quick online communication.
- Research pets' health online.
- Like concise info like Millennials.

In the Workplace:

- Comfortable with diversity.
- Skilled multitaskers from tech upbringing.
- Competitive, financially motivated, and creative.

Barnette, 2020

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Common Beliefs: Millennials

Millennials grew up during a time when the internet and social media became prevalent, shaping their childhood experiences. Millennials are accustomed to constant access to news and social media platforms. Building interpersonal connections, particularly with friends, holds significant value for them.

As Clients:

- Prefer quick online communication methods, such as texting or messaging apps, over traditional phone calls or in-person visits.
- Rely heavily on online resources and social media platforms to research their pets' health and treatment options.
- Appreciate receiving concise and easily digestible information, similar to Generation Z.

In the Workplace:

- Comfortable with diversity and value inclusivity in the workplace, often seeking out diverse perspectives and experiences.
- Skilled multitaskers, adept at juggling various tasks simultaneously due to their upbringing in a tech-savvy environment.
- Driven by competition, financial incentives, and opportunities for creativity and innovation in their work environment.

Barnette, 2020

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Common Beliefs: Gen X

Generation X grew up with analog technology but witnessed the internet's rise during their youth. Influenced by Baby Boomer parents who valued work, they aimed for better work-life balance. Family is crucial, and they view work as a means to achieve goals, unlike Boomers who define themselves by work.

As Clients:

- Prefer email for communication.
- Like written info via email, not printed handouts.
- Research before vet visits, with potential pros and cons.

In the Workplace:

- See work as a means to an end.
- Focus on results and ideas, not titles.
- Introduced "work smarter, not harder" mindset.



Barnette, 2020

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Common Beliefs: Boomers

Baby Boomers, post-World War II, embraced economic growth unlike frugal Depression-era parents. They value authority, hierarchy, and work.

As Clients:

- Prefer face-to-face or phone communication.
- Like written materials for reference.
- Respect authority, which can challenge younger professionals.

In the Workplace:

- Known for job loyalty.
- Tend to stay unless compelling reason to leave.
- Consider their work history when interacting.

Barnette, 2020

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Intergenerational Conflicts

Understanding the Source of Conflict:

- Stereotypes and Misunderstandings: Conflicts may arise from generational stereotypes, misconceptions, or misunderstandings, hindering effective communication and collaboration.
- Differing Values and Perspectives: Conflicts can occur when generations have unique values, beliefs, and life experiences that clash with each other.
- Communication Styles and Preferences: Different generations may have varying communication styles and preferences, leading to misinterpretation and conflict. Understanding these differences is key to finding common ground.



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Intergenerational Conflicts

1. Compromise: Find win-win solutions by addressing conflicting viewpoints through compromise.
2. Education: Increase awareness with workshops about generational differences, fostering empathy and reducing conflicts.
3. Mentorship: Pair different generations in mentorship programs for knowledge sharing and relationship building. **Research also suggests that putting older and young workers together helps both groups perform better.**
4. Big Picture: Keep organizational goals in focus to prioritize collective success over individual generational agendas.



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What is Empathy?

Empathy and emotional intelligence are critical tools of leadership. Management requires people skills.

Pity I acknowledge your suffering.

Sympathy I care about your suffering.

Empathy I feel your suffering.

Compassion I want to relieve your suffering.



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Active Listening in Difficult Conversations



- Active listening is when you are literally in an active state of listening.
- Your goal is to be in a psychological mindset of just hearing what the other person is saying. This means that you are not interpreting by using your own lens, but you are hearing the other person as an OTHER.
- Active listening requires full attention in order to be able to really hear the words that the other person is saying. It also requires being in a cognitive and emotional space of curiosity.
- When listening with curiosity, it doesn't mean you agree with the other person, but you are genuinely interested in their perspective.

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Reflecting



- Reflecting: Confirming understanding by repeating what's heard.
- In counseling, prompt with "What I heard you say is..." and check accuracy.
- Slows conversations, enhances understanding before responding.
- Active listening shifts to rational/wise mind, aiding thoughtful responses.
- Active listening makes the speaker feel heard, calming emotions.

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Developing Empathy (For reference)

- Journaling: Write down your thoughts, feelings, and experiences in a journal. This helps you gain clarity, process your emotions, and identify patterns or recurring themes in your life.
- Meditation: Set aside dedicated time for quiet reflection. Focus on your thoughts, emotions, and sensations without judgment. Meditation can help you develop mindfulness and increase self-awareness.
- Asking reflective questions: Pose thought-provoking questions to yourself such as "Why did I react like that?", "What are my strengths and weaknesses?", or "What am I trying to gain?". Pondering these questions encourages deep introspection.
- Seeking feedback: Request constructive feedback from trusted individuals who can provide honest insights about your strengths, areas for improvement, and blind spots. Be open to receiving feedback without defensiveness.
- Practicing mindfulness: Engage in activities with full presence and awareness, such as mindful eating, walking, or breathing. This helps you stay grounded in the present moment and observe your thoughts and emotions.
- Reviewing past experiences: Reflect on significant events or interactions in your life and evaluate how you responded, what you learned, and how you might approach similar situations in the future.
- Seeking solitude: Spend quality time alone without distractions to reflect on your thoughts, emotions, and goals. Disconnecting from technology and external stimuli can facilitate introspection.
- Engaging in therapy or counseling: Seek the support of a trained professional who can guide you through the process of self-reflection. Therapists can provide insights, techniques, and perspectives that can aid in your personal growth.
- Practicing self-compassion: Be kind to yourself during the process of self-reflection. Acknowledge and accept your flaws and imperfections without judgment or self-criticism.
- Regular check-ins: Set aside specific times throughout the day or week to check in with yourself and assess how you're feeling, what you need, and whether you're aligned with your values and goals.

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Empathy Journal Prompts (For reference)

- Describe a time when you felt deeply understood and validated by someone. How did it make you feel? How can you provide that same level of understanding and validation to others?
 - Think of a person in your life whom you struggle to understand or connect with. What might be some reasons behind their actions or behaviors? How can you approach them with more empathy and compassion?
- Reflect on a time when you made assumptions about someone based on their appearance, background, or beliefs. How did those assumptions affect your understanding of that person? What can you do to challenge and overcome those biases?
- Imagine yourself in the shoes of a person experiencing a difficult situation or challenge. How might they be feeling? How would you want others to respond to you if you were in their position?
 - Recall a recent interaction where you didn't fully listen or understand the other person. What barriers or distractions prevented you from being fully present? How can you improve your listening skills and be more attentive in future conversations?
- Write about a social issue or global problem that deeply concerns you. Explore the perspectives of various stakeholders involved. How does this exercise in perspective-taking contribute to your understanding and empathy towards different groups?
 - Reflect on a time when you unintentionally hurt someone's feelings. Put yourself in their position and consider the impact of your actions on their emotions. How can you take responsibility for your behavior and make amends?
- Think about a person who has had a significant influence on your life. What challenges or experiences might have shaped their beliefs and values? How does understanding their background help you empathize with their choices and actions?
 - Describe a situation where you witnessed someone helping or showing kindness to another person. How did that act of empathy impact you? How can you incorporate similar acts of kindness and empathy into your own life?
- Reflect on a time when someone expressed empathy towards you during a difficult moment. How did their empathy make a difference in your experience? How can you cultivate and express empathy towards others in similar situations?

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Leading and Engaging Gen Z



Understanding Gen Z in the Workplace:

- Digital Natives: Tech-savvy, expect digital integration.
- Purpose-Driven: Seek meaningful, socially impactful work.
- Entrepreneurial: Value autonomy, creativity, and innovation.
- Constant Learners: Prioritize continuous growth and skill acquisition.
- Diversity and Inclusion: Value diversity, equality, and inclusivity.

Attracting and Retaining Gen Z:

- Employer Branding: Showcase values, growth, and purpose.
- Tech-Focused Recruitment: Use digital platforms, clear communication.
- Flexibility: Offer work-life balance and flexible arrangements.
- Mentorship: Provide guidance and coaching for development.
- Competitive Compensation: Align with expectations, consider unique benefits.

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Leading and Engaging Gen Z

Creating an Environment that Fosters Gen Z's Growth and Development:

- Learning Programs: Offer workshops, mentorship, online courses.
- Feedback: Regular, constructive feedback, recognition (Quarterly reviews).
- Impactful Tasks: Assign projects for real contributions and ownership.
- Embrace Tech: Use tech tools, encourage innovation and process improvement.

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Nurturing Millennials' Potential



Harnessing Millennial Strengths:

- Tech-Savviness: Use their tech skills for innovation, provide modern tools.
- Collaboration: Encourage teamwork and cross-functional projects.
- Adaptability: Involve them in dynamic projects requiring agility.
- Social Impact: Link goals to societal causes, meaningful contributions.
- Entrepreneurial: Support creativity, risk-taking, intrapreneurship.

Promoting Growth and Advancement:

- Continuous Learning: Offer workshops, mentorship, online platforms.
- Skill Diversity: Assign varied tasks for new skills, cross-functional experiences.
- Clear Progression: Outline career paths, provide feedback, evaluations.
- Leadership Training: Tailor leadership programs for millennials.
- Mentoring: Pair with experienced mentors, encourage reverse mentoring.

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Nurturing Millennials' Potential



Addressing Millennials' Desire for Work-Life Balance and Purpose-Driven Work

- Flexibility: Offer work-life balance, tough in vet hospitals.
- Meaningful Tasks: Align assignments with passions, emphasize impact.
- Feedback: Regular feedback, acknowledgment for achievements.
- Engagement: Create community through programs, social interactions.
- Social Responsibility: Involve in sustainability efforts for positive impact.

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Engaging Gen X: The Bridge Generation

Gen X Bridging Gap:

- Mediators: Bridge older-younger gap, encourage collaboration.
- Adaptability: Navigated change, acknowledge resilience.
- Balance Advocates: Prioritize work-life balance, support flexibility.
- Independent: Value autonomy, provide ownership opportunities.
- Leadership: Guide, mentor, and lead younger generations.

Understanding Gen X in Workplace:

- Stability: Value security, offer clear paths, open communication.
- Recognition: Acknowledge expertise, provide chances to share.
- Independence: Support autonomy, ownership in projects.



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Engaging Gen X: The Bridge Generation

Leveraging Gen X's Experience and Expertise to Drive Organizational Success:

- Knowledge Sharing: Encourage knowledge sharing between generations. Provide platforms and opportunities for Gen X to share their experience and expertise with younger generations through mentorship programs, cross-generational collaboration, and reverse mentoring.
- Leadership Development: Invest in leadership development programs tailored to Gen X. Provide opportunities for them to enhance their leadership skills and take on leadership roles within the organization.
- Bridge Generational Communication: Leverage Gen X's role as the bridge generation to facilitate communication and understanding between different age groups. Encourage them to serve as mediators and facilitators in resolving conflicts and fostering collaboration.
- Respect and Appreciation: Show respect and appreciation for Gen X's contributions and experience.

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Harnessing the Wisdom of the Boomers

Boomers' Workplace Value:

- Vast Experience: Acknowledge insights from their career journey.
- Work Ethic: Value their commitment and professionalism.
- Industry Knowledge: Tap into their understanding of market trends.
- Networking: Utilize their relationship-building skills for partnerships.
- Problem Solvers: Benefit from their problem-solving expertise.

Cross-Generational Knowledge Sharing:

- Mentorship: Formal mentorship, sharing insights and guidance.
- Reverse Mentorship: Learning from younger generations.
- Collaboration: Encourage diverse teamwork for innovation.
- Knowledge Sharing Sessions: Organize sharing opportunities.



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Harnessing the Wisdom of the Boomers

Legacy-Driven Work Environment for Boomers:

- Recognition: Appreciate their contributions and celebrate achievements.
- Flexibility: Offer part-time, reduced hours, or phased retirement.
- Project Roles: Engage them in special assignments and mentoring.
- Learning: Provide tailored learning and development opportunities.
- Succession Planning: Identify successors and provide training.

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Actionable Ideas

- Mentoring Program: Pair different generations for knowledge sharing.
- Team-building Games: Foster collaboration through inclusive activities.
- Group Projects: Assign mixed-gen teams for cooperative tasks.
- Lunch and Learn: Informal sessions for expertise sharing.
- Volunteering: Bond through community service.
- Buddy Program: Pair for casual lunch or coffee meetups.
- Diversity Workshops: Promote understanding of generational diversity.
- Celebrate Achievements: Recognize milestones and birthdays across ages.



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Strategic Leadership Skills

- Share Wisdom: Encourage knowledge exchange and mentorship.
- Lead Inclusively: Demonstrate fairness and value all generations.
- Adapt to Change: Stay flexible, update strategies based on trends.
- Seek Feedback: Understand needs by listening to all generations.



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Case Study 1:

IBM is a global technology company known for effectively managing intergenerational workforces. They have implemented various initiatives to promote collaboration and understanding among different generations:

1. Reverse Mentoring Program: IBM introduced a reverse mentoring program where younger employees mentor senior executives on emerging technologies, social media, and digital trends. This initiative helps bridge the generation gap and allows experienced employees to learn from younger generations.
2. Multigenerational Task Forces: IBM creates task forces comprising employees from different generations to tackle specific business challenges. By bringing together diverse perspectives, they encourage collaboration and knowledge sharing across generations.
3. Flexible Work Arrangements: IBM recognizes the diverse needs of its workforce and offers flexible work options such as remote work and flexible schedules. This flexibility accommodates the work-life balance expectations of different generations.



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Case Study 2:

The Cheesecake Factory, a popular restaurant chain, has successfully managed intergenerational workforces by fostering a positive work environment and valuing each generation's contributions:

1. Cross-Generational Training and Mentorship: The company offers training programs that facilitate cross-generational learning and mentorship. This approach allows employees to share their expertise and learn from one another, regardless of age.
2. Recognition and Career Development: The Cheesecake Factory values its employees' contributions, regardless of their generation. They provide opportunities for career growth and development, recognizing the potential of employees from all age groups.
3. Open Communication Channels: The company maintains open communication channels where employees can provide feedback and suggestions. This inclusive approach encourages employees from different generations to voice their opinions and contribute to decision-making processes.



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Case Study 3:

Johnson & Johnson, a multinational healthcare company, has implemented strategies to effectively manage its intergenerational workforce:

- 1. Intergenerational Team Collaboration:** The company encourages intergenerational collaboration by forming diverse teams comprising employees from different generations. This approach promotes knowledge sharing, creativity, and innovation.
- 2. Employee Resource Groups (ERGs):** Johnson & Johnson has established ERGs that cater to specific generational groups, such as Young Professionals Networks and Experienced Professionals Networks. These groups provide a platform for networking, support, and sharing experiences among employees of similar generations.
- 3. Learning and Development Programs:** The company invests in learning and development programs tailored to the needs of different generations. They offer training opportunities that address specific skills and knowledge gaps, ensuring continuous growth and engagement across all age groups.



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Interesting Readings

Managing the Millennials: Discover the Core Competencies for Managing Today's Workforce by Chip Espinoza, Mick Litke, and Craig Rusch. This book focuses on understanding and managing the millennial generation in the workplace, providing insights and strategies for bridging generational gaps.

Generations at Work: Managing the Clash of Generations, Gen Xers, and Gen Yers in the Workplace by Ron Zemke, Claire Raines, and Bob Filippzak. This comprehensive guide explores the characteristics and dynamics of different generations in the workplace, offering practical advice on effectively managing and leveraging generational diversity.

The Remix: How to Lead and Succeed in the Multigenerational Workplace by Lindsay Polak. This book explores the challenges and opportunities of a multigenerational workforce and offers strategies for bridging generational gaps, fostering collaboration, and creating an inclusive work environment.

The M-Factor: How the Millennial Generation is Rocking the Workplace by Lynne C. Lancaster and David Stillman. This book focuses specifically on understanding and managing millennials, offering insights into their unique traits, values, and expectations, and providing strategies for maximizing their potential in the workplace.

Generations, Inc.: From Boomers to Linksters—Managing the Friction Between Generations at Work by Meagan Johnson and Larry Johnson. This book provides a practical framework for understanding and effectively managing generational differences in the workplace, including strategies for communication, collaboration, and talent development.

The Corporate Lattice: Achieving High Performance in the Changing World of Work by Cathy Beinke and Molly Anderson. While not solely focused on generational differences, this book explores the changing landscape of work and offers insights into creating flexible, diverse, and inclusive organizations that can accommodate the needs and aspirations of multiple generations.

When Generations Collide: Who They Are, Why They Clash, How to Solve the Generational Puzzle of Work by Lynne C. Lancaster and David Stillman. This book provides a comprehensive overview of the generational differences in the workplace and offers strategies for effectively managing and leveraging the strengths of each generation.



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Application Activity

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Questions

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5001

TRAIN THE TRAINER: EQUIPPING YOUR ENTIRE TEAM WITH 4 ESSENTIAL COMMUNICATION TOOLS

COMMUNICATION IN MANAGEMENT AND PRACTICE

 Jason Coe, DVM, PhD | Professor, Department of Population Medicine, OVC, University of Guelph

Kat Sutherland, PhD, Postdoctoral Fellow | Relationship-Centred Veterinary Medicine, OVC, University of Guelph

COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOR ALL TEAM MEMBERS

Communication skills are essential for all veterinary team members to support effective team and client interactions.¹ While there are many communication skills that have been identified as applicable to various interactions in veterinary medicine, there are four that are often considered “core” skills due to their broad relevance to any interaction in practice. The core skills are: open-ended inquiry, reflective listening, empathy, and non-verbal communication. Rather than being an optional “add-on,” communication is an important clinical skill that can be taught and learned by all practice team members to improve outcomes for the veterinary practice, team members, clients, and the patients in our care.

PRINCIPLES OF TEACHING COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Knowledge and/or experience alone do not necessarily translate into communication performance.² Rather, communication training requires a process that involves first systematically delineating and defining the communication skill to be developed, followed by opportunities to practice the skill in a small group or one-on-one format with observation and feedback.² Once the skill is in place, a commitment to ongoing awareness and deepening of the skill in a variety of contexts takes one’s communication to the next level. There are several options for experiential communication training in practice, ranging from low- to higher-risk activities. Therefore, it is important to start where your learner is, often requiring

lower-risk communication training activities (e.g., skill drills, developing back-pocket phrasing) before moving into higher-risk activities (e.g., exam room in-the-moment feedback), which also requires more significant learner investment and skilled facilitation.

DEFINITIONS AND EXAMPLES OF THE FOUR CORE COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Open-ended inquiry

An open-ended inquiry is a statement framed in a manner that invites a client or colleague to share a story, rather than a question that can be answered in a one-word response, typically “yes” or “no.”¹ Allowing clients and colleagues the opportunity to share their thoughts, rather than respond to questions that we have deemed to be important, promotes a more collaborative approach to these interactions. Questions leading to one-word answers have their role in information gathering; however, they typically are best reserved for pursuing finer details and clarifying information once an opportunity has been provided to share the initial story. By utilizing well-phrased open-ended inquiry, veterinary professionals will be more efficient and accurate in gathering information from others while ensuring they gain a more complete understanding of the other person’s perspective.¹

Examples:

- “Tell me what Arthur eats in a day, starting from first thing in the morning right through to the end of the day.”

- “What are your thoughts on starting Rory on parasite prevention year-round?”
- “What remaining questions do you have before we start Sylvester’s physical exam?”

Reflective Listening

Reflective listening first involves attentive listening without interruption, then paraphrasing back, in the veterinary professional’s own words, the content or feelings of what the other person has shared.¹ This reflection can confirm the message has been heard and interpreted correctly and provides the client or colleague the opportunity to clarify or add any additional information.

An example:

- **Client:** “It’s so hard to keep him calm, and he doesn’t like the crate. One of us is going to have to be home with him way more to make sure everything is fine and he’s healing.”
- **Veterinary professional:** “It sounds like you’re concerned about the additional time commitment and pressure this puts on you and your partner.”

Empathy Statements

Empathy is a communication skill that conveys understanding on the part of the veterinary professional.¹ Verbal demonstrations of empathy can build relationship and help facilitate others’ sharing of further concerns. Empathy can be broken down into a two-step process: first, the veterinary professional must gain an understanding and appreciation for their client’s or colleague’s feelings or predicament, and second, the veterinary professional must verbally communicate this understanding and appreciation back to the other person.¹

Examples:

- “I can see that you are really upset about what has happened to Bingo and you’re worried about what his care will look like going forward; let’s take a few minutes and revisit some of the other options available to us.”
- “I know you indicated earlier that the costs associated with Bella’s surgery are a concern for you; may we take a few minutes now to discuss these costs?”

Non-Verbal Communication

Non-verbal communication makes up as much as 80% of our message to clients or colleagues and includes several categories: kinesics, including postures, expressions, touch, and gestures; proxemics, which includes interpersonal distance, vertical height difference, angles of facing, and environmental barriers such as a computer or patient; paralanguage, which encompasses vocal cues such as tone, rate, volume, and emphasis; and autonomic responses, often involuntary reactions including blushing, blanching, sweating, and breathing.¹ Non-verbal communication skills demonstrate attentiveness and facilitate relationship-building. Additionally, if verbal and non-verbal communication are not aligned, the message of one’s non-verbal cues are likely to overshadow the content of what is being said. Therefore, it is important for veterinary professionals to be aware of and attentive to their own non-verbal channel and what they are communicating to clients. It is also important to pick up on clients’ non-verbal cues, and to acknowledge these cues to avoid assumptions or misinterpretation.

An example of acknowledging a client’s non-verbal cue:

- “You look uncertain. Tell me what you’re thinking about this treatment option so far.”

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5002

THE ART OF FEEDBACK: OVERCOMING DIFFICULT FEEDBACK CONVERSATIONS

COMMUNICATION IN MANAGEMENT AND PRACTICE

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INTRODUCTION

Veterinary practice is ripe with feedback opportunities to both motivate or change behaviour. Feedback is a process where an individual receives information that is intended to influence future performance.¹ Carefully constructed feedback, that considers an individual staff member's own development goals, is empowering. This said, feedback also can cause significant harm if constructed poorly or without the other person's interests in mind. Therefore, it is important when we offer feedback, in any context, that we start by considering a number of key characteristics of effective feedback.

Effective feedback is:^{1,2}

1. Timely

Feedback should be provided as soon as time and the situation allows, remembering that feedback loses impact if left for too long.

2. Descriptive rather than evaluative

Evaluation often urges a defensive reaction, whereas describing one's observation of another's behavior allows you to own the feedback.

3. Specific rather than vague

It is difficult to change behavior if one does not know what specific behaviour resulted in a specific outcome.

4. Constructive rather than destructive

Feedback that only serves the needs of the giver can be destructive and does not take into consideration the needs of the person receiving the feedback.

5. Directed at behaviours the person can do something about

Frustration is only escalated when one is reminded of something they have no control over.

6. Based on observable behaviours rather than the person

Making assumptions about one's intention behind a behaviour can often lead to problems; therefore, it is most effective to base feedback on observations.

7. A sharing of information rather than the giving of advice

Feedback is simply your opinion; therefore, it is best to avoid statements starting with "You should have...", "You could have..." or "You need to...".

DELIVERING FEEDBACK

Having a model for delivering feedback provides veterinary team members with a structure to frame their feedback, which can make the deliverer of feedback more comfortable.³ The Connect – Context, Behaviour, Impact – Dialogue, Next Steps (C-CBI-DN) model for delivering feedback can assist veterinary staff in approaching the different components of feedback in a logical sequence (Figure 1).³

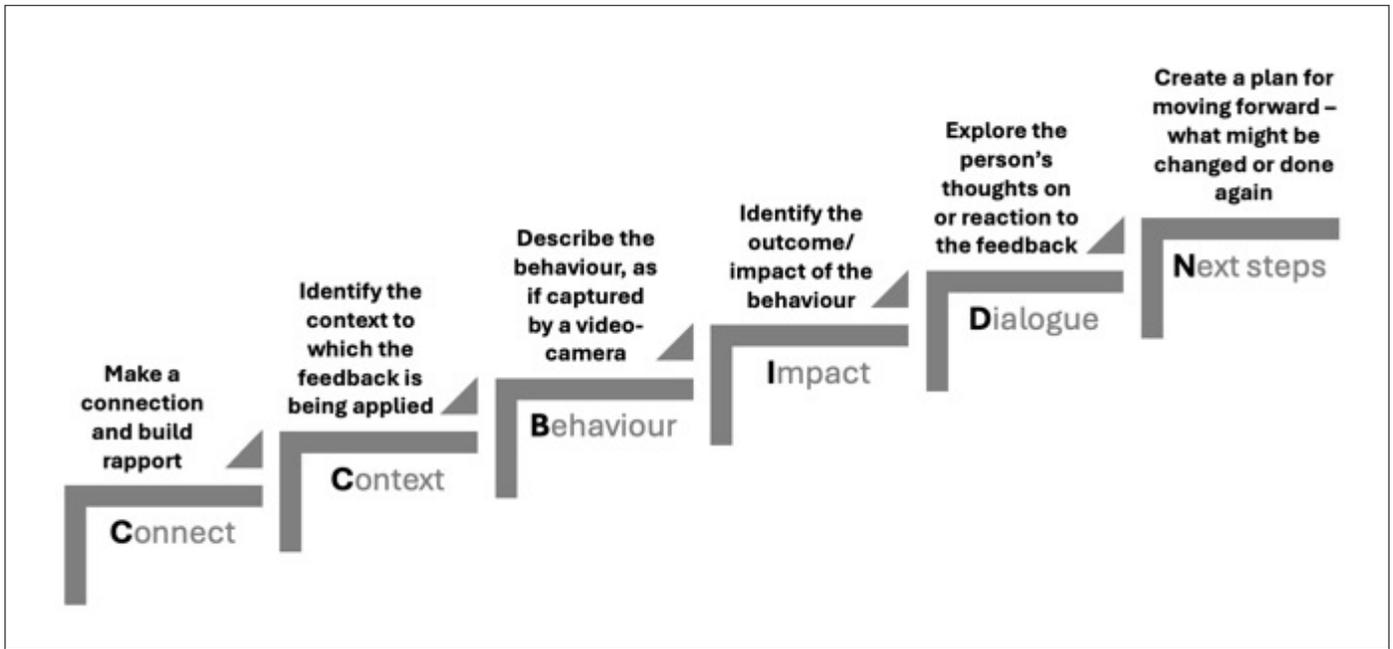


Figure 1: The C-CBI-DN Model for delivering feedback

In addition, this model can be used to provide balanced feedback that includes using it for both behaviours that worked well (to encourage individuals to keep doing) as well as behaviors that could be modified or further developed to achieve the outcome wanted.

PEARLS FOR COMMUNICATING FEEDBACK

Display your commitment to the relationship while offering feedback by incorporating relationship-building communication skills. To build trust while offering feedback, consider the acronym PEARLS,⁴ which focuses on six relationship-focused communication tools:

- Partnership – “How can I be most helpful to you as we work together?”
- Empathy – “I can see that this has been an area of concern for you.”
- Acknowledgement – “I recognize this is a lot of feedback.”
- Respect – “I give you a lot of credit for seeking this feedback.”
- Legitimization – “Most people find this to be a challenge at first.”
- Support – “I’m going to be here, for us to work together on next steps.”

RECEIVING FEEDBACK

Providing effective feedback is not only dependent on how the feedback is delivered, equally important is how the feedback is received. This can depend on the receiver’s mindset and perceptions toward feedback.¹ If feedback is approached from a fixed mindset, it can be viewed as a threat or hostile action, often putting the person on the defensive. If feedback is approached from a growth mindset, it allows a person to reframe challenges into opportunities. Creating a clinic environment where feedback is routine, and approached from a growth mindset, encourages a practice culture where feedback is routinely sought to nurture growth and ongoing team development.¹ When providing feedback it is important to take a moment to understand how your feedback has been received, by eliciting the other person’s response or reaction to your feedback. This provides space for dialogue, which can help to identify and support a team member that is moving toward a flight-or-fight reaction by revisiting how the feedback was delivered and reframing the feedback in a way that is more likely to support openness, engagement and acceptance by the receiver.

To support how feedback is received:¹

1. **Encourage clarifying questions**, to prevent misinterpretation.
2. **Provide additional examples**, to create a clearer picture of the feedback and to support development of next steps.
3. **Seek additional perspectives**, which may involve further observation, coaching and feedback from you or others.
4. **Brainstorm new ideas or approaches together**, rehearse them and then try them out live.

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5003

KNOWING YOUR CLIENTS' 'WHY': COMMUNICATING THE VALUE OF VETERINARY CARE

COMMUNICATION IN MANAGEMENT AND PRACTICE

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UNDERSTANDING PERCEPTIONS OF VALUE

Veterinary medicine is a profession where most pet owners pay for veterinary care out of pocket. As a result, a potential conflict of interest inherently exists with respect to the reality that veterinary professionals directly influence the care a patient receives, and the fact a veterinary practice receives more compensation by providing more care.¹ It has been found that some pet owners are suspicious of the motivations behind veterinary care recommendations,^{2,3} arising in part from the fact that veterinary medicine is both a healthcare profession and a business. As a result of this conflict, clients may question whether a veterinary professional's recommendation is being driven by business motivations or by the health-care needs of the animal. Likely adding to this challenge is evidence that suggests a disconnect between how veterinary professionals and their clients perceive the value of veterinary care. To address this challenge, it becomes imperative that veterinary professionals attend to this potential conflict by proactively working to understand their client's perception of value in order to communicate the value of a recommendation in a way that attends to their client's perception.

PRESENTING FEATURES, FUNCTIONS, AND BENEFITS

Conveying the value of a recommendation can include discussion of features, functions, and benefits. Features are the "what" - the time, product, or service that is being offered to a client and patient. Functions are the "how" - the process by which the feature works, or the medical information that will result from the time, product, or service. Benefits go beyond the feature and function to encompass the "why" by describing the desirable outcome to the health and wellbeing of the patient that may result from the time, product, or service and its function.⁴ Observational research has found that, when discussing the cost of veterinary care, veterinarians most often frame the value of the care they are offering in relation to their time and service without communicating the value being offered to the future health and wellbeing of the animal.⁵ ⁶ To communicate the value of veterinary care in a way that is relevant and meaningful to clients, it is important to consider going beyond simply conveying the time, service, or products being offered and communicating the value of that time, service, or product to the overall health and wellbeing of the client's animal.

Feature	Function	Benefit
Radiographs	Identifies a fracture	Confirms action needed to return pet to normal function and health (including pain reduction)
Bloodwork	Assesses function of several organs	Confirms if action is needed to maintain pet's safety and health
Therapeutic weight loss diet	Promotes weight loss while meeting nutrient requirements	Supports pet feeling satisfied, and reduces risk of obesity-related diseases in the long term to promote health and increased lifespan

EXPLORING OPTIONS FOR CARE

Research indicates that most pet owners want to be presented with all of their options for veterinary care for their animal, regardless of cost.⁷ Research also suggests that in contrast, veterinarians will often initially present clients with only the option that they deem to be most appropriate at that time.⁸ A joint exploration of the available options, where the veterinary professional and client participate and share in the decision-making process, would allow the veterinary professional to offer their medical expertise and the client the opportunity to share their own expertise including what they value for their pet and value based on their personal circumstances. By drawing on the perspectives and expertise of both the veterinary professional and the client through this collaborative approach to decision-making, there is the potential to strengthen client commitment and adherence to the decided upon course of action.

Examples:

- “There are 3 options available. Each has different benefits and disadvantages, which I would like to go over with you...”
- “Based on the information you shared with me earlier, I’ve been able to come up with a few options for changing Misty’s diet that I would like us to review together...”

TOOLS FOR COMMUNICATING THE VALUE

While communicating the benefits to a pet’s health and wellbeing is important to attend to clients’ perception of the value of veterinary care, costs are also important to communicate to allow clients to make informed decisions and to obtain informed-client consent. Written

estimates can be useful tools to facilitate cost discussions; however, research suggests they are not frequently used to support these with clients during appointments.^{5,6} It is also important to recognize that estimates are often an itemized list of the time, services, and products being offered, and should be accompanied with a conversation that explains the value of each to the patient’s overall health and wellbeing. Presenting a client with an estimate without additional discussion may not effectively communicate costs in a way that aligns with a client’s perception of value.

Another tool for communicating the cost and value of veterinary care is the “Value Matrix,” which was developed from the clinical communication program at the Ontario Veterinary College and can be used to describe existing options, along with their various advantages and disadvantages to the patient and client, in a client-friendly manner that includes cost.⁹ The Value Matrix is a communication tool that involves presenting evidence-based options in a way that takes into consideration a client’s perspective and financial resources. After gathering a comprehensive history, all of the relevant diagnostic or treatment options are listed vertically along the left-hand side of a whiteboard or piece of paper, with the advantages and disadvantages listed horizontally across the top.^{4,9} Next, in conversation with the client, various symbols are used to fill in the matrix to illustrate which advantages and disadvantages are associated with each option, incorporating both the client’s and veterinary professional’s perspectives. The final step is to list the costs associated with each option down the far right-hand side of the whiteboard or piece of paper.^{4,9} In taking this approach, each option’s value as it relates to the client and their animal is presented prior the financial costs and allows the client to make a fully informed decision.

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5004

TEAM TALK: GETTING THE MOST OUT OF YOUR TEAM

COMMUNICATION IN MANAGEMENT AND PRACTICE

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INTRODUCTION

Each veterinary practice likely follows a different cadence with respect to team meetings, department meetings, hospital rounds, and/or team huddles. Nevertheless, integrating evidence-based practices into meetings can help to fully engage team members, lead to more inclusive meetings and get the most out of your team. Research conducted across a variety of industries suggests that the process used in team meetings can impact both team and organizational outcomes, such as team productivity and organizational success (e.g. turnover, number of employees, innovation, etc.).¹ Extrapolating from human medicine, daily team huddles

positively impact teamwork through improved team communication, co-ordination and collaboration, as well as team process outcomes, such as enhanced efficiency.^{2,3} Further, the implementation of multi-role team huddles demonstrate a positive impact on patient safety.⁴ Although research on team meetings in the context of veterinary medicine remains scarce, it benefits veterinary teams to actively review their meeting processes on a regular basis and utilize methods that have been shown to enhance outcomes. Drawing from existing evidence, below are a few strategies for approaching team meetings to consider:

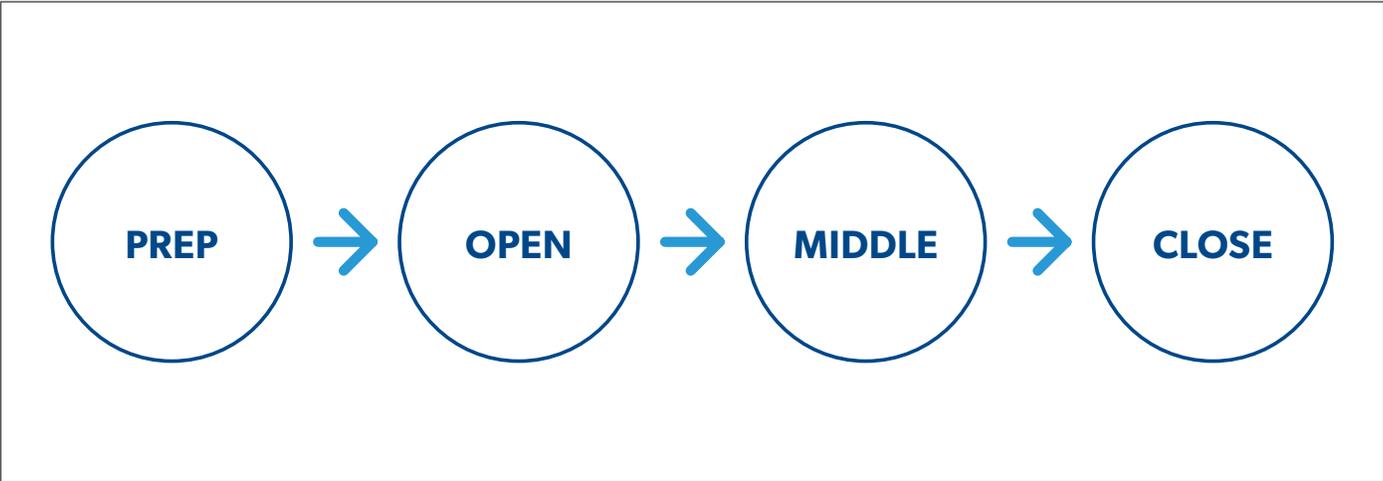


Figure 1. The structure of a team meeting

PREP YOUR MEETING

1. Establish an Agenda

Develop a meeting agenda, create a process for team members to provide input on agenda items, and whenever possible make it available to the team before the meeting. Perceptions of meeting quality are significantly higher when a formal agenda is available in advance of the meeting.⁵ For formal meetings, an agenda can be sent to the team beforehand. For routinely scheduled meetings, rounds, or team huddles, establish a routine agenda or create a meeting board visible to the whole team. To help with time management, consider adding time allotments to your agenda.

2. Determine Ground Rules

Ground rules are a set of expectations (i.e. the code of conduct) that will be followed during a meeting to enable productive collaboration and improve group behaviours. Ground rules benefit the meeting process, as they allow for quick identification of dysfunctional group behaviours and create a sense of shared responsibility for improving group interactions. While procedural ground rules, such as no cellphones in meetings, or starting and ending on time, can help the meeting process, behaviour-based ground rules (e.g., having a growth mindset) lead to more effective group processes.⁶ Ground rules are most effective when co-created with your team to gain buy-in and should be reviewed regularly.

OPEN YOUR MEETING

1. Introductions

Formal introductions are often used when there are new team members joining the meeting and may consist of introducing preferred names, pronouns, and relevant background information, such as role in the practice. In routine or regular team meetings (e.g., rounds or team huddles), introductions are also important to identify an individual's role on the team that day and to help support a culture where team members become accountable for their role.⁷ This may be particularly helpful in large hospital settings, or for roles that are scheduled for specific responsibilities during a shift. For example, "Good morning, I'm Sarah, the RVT working as pharmacy technician until 3 pm today."

2. Create a Connection / Check-in

Initiate a quick, yet formal check-in process during your meetings or daily rounds/huddles to help identify any potential roadblocks that may be impacting your team. For example:

- What is one word you would use to describe your week?
- What is important for the team to know right now, that you feel is impacting your work?
- On a scale of 1 to 10, how are you showing up today? (1 – I want to run out the door to 10 – could not be doing better)

Probe team members' responses to learn more, as appropriate.

Appreciative inquiry is a process for promoting positive change by allowing people to focus on what is working well and engaging them in identifying their strengths.⁸ Appreciative inquiry can also be used to create a connection at the start of a meeting by using a question geared toward personal, professional, or organizational strengths. For example:

- What is a recent win or highlight from your department?
- Tell us something that made you feel valued in the last week.
- What is a goal you are working towards right now?
- Share a strength that you bring to your work.

3. Review the Agenda

Whether your agenda was prepared in advance of the meeting, or you are following a standard process in your meetings, remember to review the agenda toward the beginning of the meeting.

MANAGE THE MIDDLE OF YOUR MEETING

1. Listening First: Starting with Others' Perspectives

"The art of conversation lies in listening" – Malcolm Forbes

When it comes to the meeting middle, where core agenda items will be discussed, meeting leads and/or leadership often benefit from hearing from others first. By starting with other's perspectives, we understand where they are in their thinking, which often provides crucial information to inform the most appropriate approach for leading the discussion. Being also aware of whose voice is missing from the discussion is also important for increasing inclusion on decisions (e.g., Who is not in the meeting, that should be for this discussion?). Meeting leads should also pay attention to how team members are engaging in the discussion – Is one person dominating the conversation? Whose voice from the group has not been heard?

2. Utilize Communication Skills to Help Manage Time

Several key communication skills can be used by the meeting lead to help the team stay on track, by providing structure to the discussion, and to assist with time management. To create an equal opportunity for team members to develop their communication and leadership skills, it can be beneficial to rotate who will be leading each meeting.

Key communication skills to assist with leading team meetings:

Asking permission: checking in to see if the team is ready to move forward.

- e.g. We have 5 minutes remaining, can we transition to brainstorming how we want to approach being short a technician today? [pause]

Signpost: a transition statement used to mark where the discussion has been and/or where it is going next by outlining the direction of the conversation or signaling a change in topic.

- e.g. We will take the next 2 minutes to review today's schedule.

Summarize: a review of multiple pieces of information, pulling everything together. Summarizing can be used at various points throughout a meeting to draw together

salient points as well as at the end of a meeting to emphasize the most important takeaways.

- e.g., To recap: because we are down a technician everyone has agreed to take on one extra responsibility today, we have also reviewed today's appointment schedule to see where we still have openings for any emergencies, and everyone has been assigned a time throughout the day to take their lunch break. What has been missed?

CLOSE YOUR MEETING

1. Forecasting & Summarizing

To keep your meeting on time, acknowledge that the meeting will soon come to a close (e.g., we have 5 minutes remaining) in order to leave room for any outstanding topics that need to be addressed. As you approach the last couple of minutes use signposting to transition into the last portion of your meeting, which commonly consists of a final summary to capture key meeting points and to review the agreed upon action items moving forward (e.g. "Before we wrap up at 3 pm, I'm going to review the key points from today's meeting, and all of the action items we have").

2. End with Gratitude

Both collective and relational gratitude have been found to be directly related to job satisfaction and indirectly related to job performance.⁹ Collective gratitude is the compilation of different dimensions of gratitude that can exist within a workplace, including gratitude expressed from management to employees or gratitude between colleagues, and which fosters a positive organizational culture. Relational gratitude can also be a source of positive emotion, for example gratitude received from clients. Injecting gratitude into team meetings has been found to improve team members physiological response to stress and improve subsequent task performance.¹⁰

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6001

UNLEASHING YOUR TEAM'S CREATIVITY

INNOVATION & CHANGE

 *Lee-Anne McAlear, HonsBA | The Centre of Excellence in Innovation Management Program Director, Schulich Executive Education Centre Program*

In today's wildly changing business landscape, the imperative for innovation and creativity has never been more pronounced. The World Economic Forum's most recent Job Study underscores this reality, placing creativity and innovation among the top five skills needed for success in the 21st century. Creativity and innovation play a vital role in driving sustainable growth and differentiation.

How do leaders harness people's creativity and agency? Understanding the nature of creativity, and how it shows up at work and in life can enhance people's work experience and improve business results. The FourSight Creative Problem-Solving Process is one proven methodology designed to harness the collective creative potential within organizations. At its core, Foursight emphasizes the recognition and utilization of four distinct creative preferences: Clarifiers, Ideators, Developers, and Implementers. By understanding and leveraging these preferences, teams can unlock a wealth of diverse perspectives and approaches to problem-solving.

Clarifiers excel at defining problems and gathering relevant information, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the challenges at hand.

Ideators thrive in generating a myriad of novel ideas and solutions, pushing boundaries, and exploring uncharted territories.

Developers excel in refining and enhancing promising concepts, bringing them to fruition through meticulous planning and execution.

Implementers, on the other hand, specialize in translating ideas into action, driving projects forward with precision and efficiency.

Each stage of the Foursight process plays a critical role in driving innovation—from problem identification to solution implementation.

Moreover, it's essential to equip teams with a toolbox of creative techniques to facilitate ideation and innovation effectively. Techniques such as brainstorming, mind mapping, and lateral thinking can stimulate creativity, encourage divergent thinking, and unearth groundbreaking ideas. By providing the necessary resources and support for creative exploration, veterinary businesses can unleash the full potential of their teams and delight their clients.

6002

THE DESIGN THINKING IN ACTION

INNOVATION & CHANGE

 *Lee-Anne McAlear, HonsBA | The Centre of Excellence in Innovation Management Program Director, Schulich Executive Education Centre Program*

In the ever-evolving world of veterinary practice, innovative problem-solving methodologies are essential. Design Thinking is a powerful approach that not only tackles immediate challenges but also fosters long-term resilience and growth.

At its heart, Design Thinking is all about people. It puts empathy, creativity, and continuous learning at the forefront to effectively address complex issues. The process unfolds through five interconnected stages:

Empathize: Dive deep into the needs and desires of both pet owners and staff members. Understand their pain points, dreams, and behaviors.

Define: Synthesize insights gathered from empathetic exploration to pinpoint the key challenges and opportunities.

Ideate: Let the ideas flow freely without constraints. Encourage out-of-the-box thinking and collaboration to explore a multitude of solutions.

Prototype: Transform the selected ideas into tangible prototypes or experiments. Test them rapidly to gather feedback and refine concepts.

Test: Roll out refined solutions in real-world scenarios. Collect feedback, iterate as needed, and keep refining until you achieve the best outcomes.

What sets Design Thinking apart is its focus on the user, experimentation, and continuous improvement. Unlike traditional linear approaches, Design Thinking thrives in the face of uncertainty, offering a flexible framework that adapts to evolving circumstances.

For veterinarians, practice owners, and staff, Design Thinking brings immense value. It deepens the understanding of client needs, leading to increased satisfaction and loyalty. By fostering a culture of innovation, it empowers team members to contribute fresh ideas and solutions. Moreover, its iterative nature enables swift adaptation to changing market dynamics, ensuring agility and resilience in uncertain times.

Design Thinking isn't just a methodology—it's a strategic toolkit for navigating the complexities of the veterinary industry with empathy, creativity, and resilience. By embracing this human-centered approach, businesses can uncover new opportunities for growth, differentiation, and sustainable success.

6003

THE POWER OF A CREATIVE CLIMATE

INNOVATION & CHANGE

 *Lee-Anne McAlear, HonsBA | The Centre of Excellence in Innovation Management Program Director, Schulich Executive Education Centre Program*

The role of organizational culture in business success cannot be overstated. It serves as the linchpin connecting strategy execution, employee engagement, and client satisfaction.

Culture isn't just a buzzword; it's the invisible force driving every aspect of our organization. As Peter Drucker famously said, "Culture eats strategy for breakfast." However, let's not stop there—culture eats it for lunch and dinner, too. Unlike strategy, which can be crafted and adjusted, culture permeates every facet of our organization, influencing behaviors, decisions, and outcomes. It's the collective beliefs, values, and norms that shape our identity and guide our actions.

On the other hand, climate represents the tangible aspects of our organizational environment—the "feel" of the workplace. While culture is enduring and deeply ingrained, climate can fluctuate based on immediate factors like leadership style, policies, and interpersonal dynamics. While both are essential, it's the alignment of culture and climate that creates an environment conducive to success.

Ekvall and Isaksen research into the dimensions of a creative climate developed a framework designed to foster creativity, innovation, and employee satisfaction within organizations. These dimensions encompass factors such as challenge, freedom, idea time, playfulness/humor, conflict, idea support, risk-taking, debates, idea implementation, and trust/openness. By prioritizing these dimensions, we cultivate an environment where employees feel empowered to contribute their best work, driving organizational excellence.

By nurturing a creative climate, we can unlock the full potential of our employees, driving strategy execution and enhancing client satisfaction. When employees feel challenged, supported, and valued, they become more engaged, innovative, and committed to achieving our collective goals. Moreover, a positive organizational culture radiates outward, enhancing our reputation, attracting top talent, and fostering long-term client relationships built on trust and excellence.

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LEADING INNOVATION: A PATH TO DRAMATIC IMPROVEMENT

INNOVATION & CHANGE

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Innovation is undeniably crucial for business success, yet a recent McKinsey poll revealed a stark reality—while 84% of leaders believe in its importance, a staggering 94% are dissatisfied with their innovation performance. This glaring gap between aspiration and execution calls for a fundamental shift in how we approach innovation.

It's time to challenge conventional notions of innovation and embrace a new paradigm—one that views innovation not as a lofty ideal or only a technological play but as a disciplined approach akin to other organizational functions like sales, marketing, accounting, and operations. According to Dr. David Weiss, author of "Innovative Intelligence," leading innovation requires a unique blend of analytical (IQ), emotional (EQ), and innovative (Innovation IQ) intelligences, along with a strategic and tactical skill set.

To improve innovative results dramatically, we must rethink our approach to innovation:

Define Innovation: Start by revisiting how we define innovation. It's not limited to breakthrough inventions; rather, it encompasses a spectrum of activities, from incremental improvements to disruptive transformations. By broadening our understanding of innovation, we open ourselves to a wider range of opportunities for growth and evolution.

Engage Stakeholders: Innovation is a collaborative endeavor that requires active engagement from diverse stakeholders across the organization. From frontline employees to C-suite executives, everyone has a role to play in driving innovation forward. By fostering a culture of inclusivity and openness, we can harness the collective intelligence of our teams and unlock innovative potential.

Adopt a Systematic Approach: Leading innovation effectively demands a systematic approach. Begin by identifying the levels and types of innovation needed to achieve strategic goals. Next, evaluate the implications of innovation on resources, processes, and culture, and devise strategies to mitigate risks effectively. Finally, execute innovation initiatives through cross-functional teams, fostering a collaborative environment where experimentation is encouraged, and failure is viewed as a stepping stone to success.

Innovation isn't a mystical endeavor reserved for a select few—it's a discipline that can be cultivated and nurtured within our organizations. By rethinking our approach to innovation, embracing diverse perspectives, and leveraging our analytical, emotional, and innovative intelligences, we can drive growth, resilience, and competitive advantage.



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